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VIALS OF WRATH; OR, THE GRAVE BETWEEN THEM.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,

Author of "Two Girls' Lives," "Love Blind," "Oath Bound," "Barbara's Fate," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHADOW ON THE SOUL.

GEORGIA LEXINGTON sat beside the window, whiter than the unfolded letter she held in her rigid fingers; she sat there, motionless as if carved from marble, with her eyes wearing a dull, stony horror in their blue depths, as they seemed riveted on the letter whose seal she had not yet dared break.

An hour ago her maid had tapped on her door and handed her the letter; an hour from the instant she caught a glance of the superscription she had dropped into the nearest chair, utterly overcome with the agitation it had produced.

It was pitiful, this petrifying influence that had fallen so suddenly, so awfully upon her. The tiny bouquet of tea-roses she had let fall just as she was fastening them in her hair, the rings awaiting their posts of honor on her fair fingers, the lace barbe that she had intended pinning at her throat, but that had now fallen off the bureau.

That fateful letter had come like a two-edged sword into her life, cutting right and left with a quickness that was none the less painful because of its sudden unexpectedness, and it lay in her cold fingers still unread, while the stony horror died slowly from her eyes, and her figure grew less rigid, only to assume such an utter abandonment of woe.

Then, with a little gasp, with a little shiver running over her frame, she slowly opened the elegantly addressed envelope, unfolded the sheet, and read the short, strange communication whose coming changed all her life. This was what she read with her blue eyes full of haunting misery:

"Georgia, I am coming home, after seventeen years' separation from kindred and country. I shall expect my wife to receive me on Tuesday."

"T. L."

That was all; but what an "all" it meant to her, this tempest-tossed, heart-sore woman, who had led her quiet, eventful life those long, long years since the day her lord and master had left her, in that very room, after such a terrible interview as they had had.

She had never heard aught from him in all those years; she had never known whether he were living or dead, miserable or content in his self-appointed banishment from the world. She had lived on and on, not wholly miserable, because she knew she was perfectly guiltless of the causes of their separation; because, with her great wealth, she was able to enjoy much of life, and with her charms of mind and manner and appearance, had made a large circle of friends, exclusive though she was, and retiring in all her ways. She had guarded her one secret well all those years, when she had been passing from twenty to thirty-eight, the bloom and heyday of woman's life, that had laid magic fingers on Georgia Lexington, and only developed her rare beauty instead of detracting from it.

She was thirty-eight, and looked easily ten years younger in her splendid blonde beauty, that had been so passionately dear to Theo Lexington in early, happy days.

A full-sized woman, of exquisite proportions, and yet whose physique suggested slenderness and willowy lissness rather than solidity; a woman whose sweet face, fair as marble, had had set on its beautiful contour, like a seal, the impress of the subduing, refining fires of trial through which she had passed; in whose dark, violet blue eyes, lingered shadows of tender thoughtfulness, around whose perfect mouth were lines of sweetest gravity. She read her letter only once, then replaced it in its cover, laid it on the bureau, thinking, as with calm, deliberate fingers she arranged her wondrously golden hair, and deftly wound among the loose, flowing braids, a vine of fragrant honeysuckle, she thought how well she had guarded her secret—his and hers—all those years, and a look of satisfaction crept among the shadows in her eyes as she thought not a soul in all the wide world would know when Theo Lexington came home why he had gone away, or that for so many years his wife had heard no word from him.

They were proud people, both of them, and it would have been worse than death for either of them to know their names were bandied about from one coarse mouth of gossiping scandal to another; and, though they were enemies to each other, the world never knew, and in its ignorance pitied Mrs. Lexington, because her delicate health forbade her accompanying her noble, sacrificing husband on his scientific tour to the far eastern countries, where, by his famed explorations, he was adding desirable information to a grateful country's stock of knowledge.

Mrs. Lexington had quietly expressed her willingness to add her share to the husband's



"Give me back my baby-girl, then I will forgive you!"

contribution by remaining alone at Tanglewood, and the months and years went on until it would have been more surprising to see Mr. Lexington than to be without him.

And now—now he was coming home. Now the quiet, monotonous life of seventeen years was broken in upon, and the future held—what? Ah, what!

Georgia asked it of herself with a calm, credulous smile, that was as much pain as contempt, and then opened her jewel case, and from under the cushion that formed a false bottom, took a large, diamond-studded locket, to which was attached a simple piece of blue silken cord.

A swift anguish swept over her beautiful face as she unclosed it and looked eagerly, steadily at the well-impressed face on the porcelain within. She gazed almost passionately, her form perceptibly shivering, as a lily leaf sways under a heavy gale.

It was a man's magnificent face that she saw; whose wide, frank gray eyes met hers so freely. A face that had that about it which was hard to define, yet that could not have failed to have made any woman's heart quicken its throbs at sight of its strengthful beauty and repose.

There was a handsome, proudly set head, thrown ever so slightly back in a free, careless way, that was bewitchingly graceful; there were loose, slightly curly waves of sun-dainty brown hair, utterly guiltless of any studied arrangement—hair that mutely seemed to invite a woman's white hand to caress it, that seemed to promise to cling lovingly to some soft-touching, quivering fingers.

The beard matched his hair in hue and loose waviness, and was worn only on either side the face, leaving the round, well-formed chin bare, and as well the mouth. And such a mouth—such a mouth as was Theo Lexington's! No wonder Georgia had, to force back

the hot tears she felt welling up from her very heart; no wonder she remembered so bitterly how, years and years before, she had thought it worth all other earthly bliss to have those perfect lips touch hers—that grand, grave, sweet mouth, that smiled above the beautiful teeth with such rare, enchanting power.

It was there his beauty lay especially, although Georgia knew that, allied with this splendid face and head were equal graces of intellect, ease and refinement of manner, and perfect symmetry of form.

And this was Theo Lexington, her husband—her husband in name only; and he was coming home to her—"his wife."

She shut the locket softly, as if the metallic click of the catch reminded her of the closing of a coffin-lid; she laid it tenderly down on a pile of letters—faded, worn, yet bearing their address in the same undeniable handwriting in which the letter that had that day come to her was addressed.

She took the letters up as if it hurt them to be touched, as if they were suffering, sensitive creatures, with hearts as sore as hers.

Her fair, jeweled fingers seemed caressing them as they opened one after another, and her well-trained eyes knew just where to alight on the fond, caressing names that were interspersed through these letters written her when she was so perfectly happy, except during her husband's temporary absence of a month.

She saw many a "darling" and "my own one"; "dearest," and "sweet wife"; and the shivers over her frame seemed to quicken and increase.

Then—a terrible change came suddenly over her, as her hands took up the last letter of the packet. Her eyes seemed overflowing with anguish that gradually faded, and was followed by a hard, steely glitter that made their beautiful blueness darken to blackness.

She read this letter—it was short—entirely through; and then put it away with the others, with the hard, firm, almost cruel look still on her mouth.

"For everything else I would have forgiven him; for that—never—never! Let him come if he chooses; it is nothing to me. This is his house, his home, and he has the right. Only—I will never forgive him for that!"

She turned the little golden key of her jewel-case and hung it on her watch-chain, and then rang the bell for her maid.

Her order was quiet, to the point, and as careless as if a meal were to be sent up.

"Amber, tell Mrs. Robinson to have the blue suite put in readiness at once. Your master, Mr. Lexington, will be home on Tuesday."

Then, with a glance in the dressing-mirror, to see if her toilet was unexceptionable, Mrs. Lexington went down the grand staircase, and out on the veranda, where fresh, girlish voices and merry laughter greeted her.

CHAPTER II. WAITING.

FROM the moment of Mrs. Lexington's announcement to her maid that Mr. Lexington was expected home on Tuesday, there reigned supreme excitement at Tanglewood, among guests as well as servants, and Georgia found she needed all her skill and courage to answer the numerous questions asked her, in the same spirit of quiet indifference that had characterized her life apart from her husband.

To many of her guests—and she had at Tanglewood quite a company—Mr. Lexington was an entire stranger, while to but one or two gentlemen and part of the servants—the elderly ones who had grown up in the Lexington employ—who he had returned as an old friend.

The young ladies, especially, plied Georgia

with all sorts of questions as to his personal appearance, his manner, his address, and, from the vague replies with which Georgia managed to satisfy them, and which they in turn communicated to their gentlemen friends, the impression went forth that Mr. Lexington was simply perfection, and congratulations were offered Georgia until her very heart sickened at the unconscious mockery.

The intervening days between the receipt of her husband's letter and the day appointed for his return passed as days will pass, whether freighted with leaden-footed misery or upborne by joy and hope's buoyant wings.

There were dinners to eat, and evenings to dress for; housekeeping accounts to attend to, calls to receive or make; nights of sweet, sad silence, whether passed in weary, wakeful watching, or among the mystic glories of the dream-lands; there were days of duties, and charities, and then—Tuesday came.

Georgia almost expected to see a wild, sweeping storm abroad when she parted the silken curtains of her dressing-room that fateful morning; it would have been in keeping, she thought, with the gloomy shadows that had darkened her life at its onset, through Theo Lexington, this husband of hers, who had left her in wildest wrath, who was coming—how!

But Tanglewood was fairly radiant in the June sunshine, in which it lay as in a bath of liquid gold. There had been a light shower in the night, and on a million blades of short-shorn grass the tiny points of rain-drops glistened in the sunlight like crystals, in whose hearts was, as it were, a prisoned fire. Every leaf was vividly green, and the branches of the grand old trees in the far-spreading park swayed slowly in the breeze that was softly blowing.

On the lawn, that stretched away from the flight of granite steps that led to the grand entrance at Tanglewood, like a sheet of emerald velvet, not a leaf, or stick, or stone, marred its beauty, that was lightened by the social suggestiveness of the upright wickets for croquet, and the brilliant-hued balls and mallets still lying where fair or strong young hands had left them, late in the warm moonlight of the night before.

At one side, in the tangled grove of interlacing trees—from which picturesque spot Georgia could see the gleam of statuary among the cool, green shadows; and beyond, between the grove and the blue, undulating hills, the noisy, frothing brook that fairly danced along between banks of deep, turfy moss, and overhanging vines of wild, broad-hearted roses, and sprawling, sturdy, brown-armed grapevines.

It was a glorious heritage, this home to which she had been brought the happiest bride that ever the sun shone on, in which she had suffered such revelations of sorrow as seldom fall to the lot of woman; and where she had learned the hardest lesson life can teach—a lesson no mortal ever yet learned perfectly—to endure in silence when the heart is fairly freezing with tortuous anguish.

A fair home for a travel-worn exile to come to; and Georgia, as she drew a deep breath of pain, turned from the window, and submitted herself to Amber, whose deft, well-trained touch never failed of soothing Georgia in moods when it seemed she should die, if she did not scream or make some moan in token of the accumulated woe of those lonely years, during all whose slow passage she had been her own confidante only.

She was radiant that morning, when she went down to the nine o'clock breakfast, and in her white lawn robe, a marvel of filmy lace ruffles, and insertions, and buttoned from throat to feet with rare sprays of bright pink coral, she was fairer, more beautiful, younger, for all her troubles, her thirty-eight years, than any of the bevy of pretty, graceful girls who were grouped in the huge bay window.

Ida Wynne was the first to greet her—a brilliant, petite girl, with cheeks like a wood-rose, and eyes and hair the hue of a ripe chestnut.

"Mrs. Lexington! to think the eventful day has actually arrived! To think we shall really see, in the flesh, the wonderful Prince Charming we have heard of and read about nearly all our lives. You must be the happiest woman in the world this morning—aren't you?"

A pitiful, almost appealing glance crept into Mrs. Lexington's eyes; she laid her hand caressingly on the girl's round arm and smiled in the eager upturned face.

"I am afraid so many years roughing it abroad has endangered Mr. Lexington's right to the complimentary title you romantic girls have given him."

She evaded the direct question as well as she could, and just then the pompous butler announced the readiness of breakfast, and amid the animated discussion of broiled partridge on toast, the delicious rice-cakes, water-cresses and marmalade, even the wonderful event of Mr. Lexington's return was momentarily forgotten except by Georgia, whose eyes and ears were sharpened to catch the first warning sign and sound.

It came suddenly, after all, the announcement of his name by the footman, in a hushed, suppressed tone of excitement; came as the news of a death always comes to the very watchers at the bedside who count the fading pulse and see the slowly, surely ebbing sounds.

"Mr. Lexington! In the yellow drawing room, madam."

Georgia's heart gave a fearful bound; but no eye of the score that instinctively turned to note the effect of the news upon her, would have dreamed how madly the blood was surging through her veins, or how such wildly conflicting emotions were storming at her heart.

She calmly met the man's half curious glance, and then laid down her spoon with which she was sipping her chocolate.

"I will see him at once; of course you will all excuse me."

Her voice was modulated to perfection. She arose and walked rapidly from the room, through the long, wide corridor, over whose marble floor lay broad banners of variegated light, reflected by the sunshine that glinted through the stained windows; past niches where huge bronze warriors stood on guard with drawn bow, or Parian nymphs with averted faces, held their flowing garments over perfect limbs.

It seemed to Georgia she never would reach him. She seemed to be walking as she had walked in some frightful, half waking—a step forward, two backward.

But she reached the door at last. It was ajar. She hesitated one last moment, and then, calling all her wonderful resources of energy and will and strength to her command, she went in, to the presence of her husband—after seventeen years.

CHAPTER III. THE GULF BETWEEN.

A GRACEFUL, manly figure stepped from the semi-darkness of the grand saloon—the very form and face, so like a god, that reposed in Georgia's jewel case, to which time had been as kindly sparing as to her; still so wondrously beautiful, still so witchingly fair.

"Georgia! Georgia! at last I see you—can it be possible?"

He came rapidly forward, his face alight, his hands extended in almost rapturous greeting.

She had remained just within the threshold, standing like a splendid statue while he spoke. When he advanced, she gestured him back, with a coldness that petrified him to the spot.

Then her low, sweet, icy voice made answer: "We have met face to face, Mr. Lexington, for the first time since a day neither of us will be likely to forget. Why you have come, remains to be explained."

His eyes seemed riveted on her face, to her eyes, in whose violet darkness he only saw the well simulated coldness—this that was the result of years of effort; the natural consequence of a passionate love she was determined to crush. She said it so haughtily, the while the sight of his face, the tones of his voice, thrilled her with almost maddening ecstasy.

"Georgia! surely after all these years you do not mean to hurt me thus! Georgia, wife! have you not forgiven me my foolishness, my—my cruelty?"

His voice reminded her of other days when he wooed and won her; she would have almost sold her soul to have rushed to his arms and have him kiss her again and again and again. "Yet—oh! woman's outraged pride! oh, woman's bitter memories of a past; she cannot bring herself to forgive."

She listened as if her heart was steel.

"Forgive you? forgive you your wicked jealousy, when you learned you had married a woman who was perfect in your eyes until you found she had been married once before, and honorably divorced. Forgive you, when you nearly drove her crazy with your jealousy of the man who won her girlish affections and then abused her, and then, a year after the divorce, died and left her doubly free. Forgive you, Theo Lexington! is it likely?"

She drew her figure to its proudest height, and her blue eyes darkened with anger as she recited her dark memories.

"I worshipped you so, my wife; it is, it was my only excuse for my sin in wounding you so. It came so suddenly, you know, the fact that instead of my wife being only the widow of Carleton Vincy, she was his divorced wife as well. That was a fearful blow to me, Georgia—you know it was, and in my horror, and grief, and anger I was beside myself—it is a poor reason to give, but I have none other, and in these years of absence I have been so lonely, so miserable, so homesick for you, Georgia, that I have repented bitterly our estrangement, our amiable separation that the world might spare us ignominy. Georgia, my wife! my darling! I have traveled thousands of miles to hear you say 'Theo, I forgive you!' Won't you? won't you?"

His voice trembled with the passion of a man who pleads his heart's dearest desire. His splendid face was full of eager entreaty, and his eyes looked into Georgia's with a love, an adoration that made her fairly sick with pitiful pain.

She hesitated a second, then raised her head proudly. "Why should I? For years you have lived without me, doubtless you can survive the remaining ones in store. For years I have heard no word from you, for years we have skillfully blinded Argus-eyed society—and so I ask what, by this coming home, do you mean, when we were both better off the wider the distance between us?"

He listened, almost humbly.

"I have said why I came to hear you say you forgive me. I came because I want you to commence life over again with me—commence it as we did years ago, when there was not a cloud between us; as we commenced the day we came to Tanglewood."

A low, gasping cry came from her lips as he said that. Her eyes dilated almost wildly, her bosom heaved irregularly.

"As we came to Tanglewood! Theo Lexington, if we could start afresh as we came to Tanglewood, I would not only forgive you everything, but go down on my knees and kiss the ground your feet trod upon! Give me back my baby-girl, cross the black chasm of death over which you thrust her, my golden-haired darling—go down into the grave and bring her back to me, whom your hands tore from my breast, because she was Carleton Vincy's as well as mine, and then—then I will forgive you!"

Her voice had commenced in tones of anguish; when she finished she was hard and calm again; while Lexington's grand head

drooped before her a second. Then he raised a pale, pain-convulsed face.

"You are relentless as the grave itself, and yet, I pray you, listen to me, and have some pity. You remember the terrible night the revelation came to me of the divorce? You recollect you were not well—that the excitement was too much for you—that the physicians ordered perfect rest and quiet—that your baby-girl, the little two-year-old Jessamine, made the whole house resound with her lamentations. You knew afterward I took her away to be cared for by a couple up the country, and how—how?"

He looked almost deprecatingly at Georgia's pale, stern face.

"I remember perfectly." She took up the pitiful story with a precision and stoicism that fairly scathed him. "I remember that when I recovered, weeks afterward, and called for my baby, you told me, with fiendish maliciousness, she was gone, and would remain, as a punishment for my deception to you. And I remember, Theo Lexington, how, while my heart bled itself empty for her, and my breast ached for her little nestling head, and my hands grew numb for want of their wanted care; while you deliberately saw all this, and thought it no more than I deserved, that God took her, and—and—Theo! Theo! give me back my baby and I'll forgive you!"

A sudden, melting pathos now flooded her closing words, and she came forward and laid her quivering fingers on his arm.

He groaned in very bitterness of soul, and his whole frame trembled under the touch of her light hand.

"God forgive me—I cannot forgive myself! If it were possible, I'd give my life for her—for Carleton Vincy's child, and think it cheaply bought if it secured you an hour's happiness."

His piteous humility touched her—even her, whose life had been blasted by his hands. "Theo—she said his musical name so softly, so sweetly—"I will forgive you. I will forgive you, but I never can forget. We can be friends—I will try, at least. Let this suffice."

A great bliss had dawned in his eyes, but it faded before her calm decision.

"Georgia! you never could have loved me—never, or you could not repulse me so! Look at me, Georgia, just once; look at me, and tell me if there is no hope? Will you come to me for once, for all, my darling?" He stepped back and opened and extended his arms, his eyes flashing with passionate entreaty, his lips parted in half hopeful expectation.

Georgia's brain whirled as she looked into his eyes, his ardent face. She imagined the touch of his lips to hers in a kiss that she knew would seal their future happiness; her whole soul hungered and thirsted for the close folding of his waiting arms.

Her violet eyes darkened; her mouth parted in swift, half-smiling obedience to the dictates of her half-starving heart. Then she drew back, coolly.

"We can never resume our life where we left off. For the future, if you wish it, we can keep up our pitiful farce."

Lexington's arms dropped swiftly. A compression of his lips that Georgia had never seen on them in all her life before, a gloomy, red gleam in his eyes, and their paths diverged again.

"You have elected wisely, perhaps. I shall live with you here at Tanglewood, and, as you say, no one will be the wiser for the skeleton in our closet. And now, Mrs. Lexington, will you be so kind as to introduce me to your guests?"

One wild, awful pang at her heart, as she realized it was over with at last, and Georgia accepted her husband's arm and went down to introduce "Prince Charming."

And so it began—that dreadful life of theirs, compared to which all future sorrows, all those years of silent endurance were as hours of lightest, gayest pleasure.

CHAPTER IV. A WOMAN'S HEART.

LEANING on her husband's arm, her beautiful face full of a pride she could not repress, and that was readily mistaken for shy delight and happiness, Georgia Lexington returned to the anxiously expectant party in the breakfast room.

"This is Mr. Lexington—Mr. and Mrs. Hammond—you will remember my husband; Miss Ernest, Miss Reynolds, Mr. Gale, Mr. Raymond—these are strangers, Mr. Lexington, to you, but friends of mine. And this is Miss Wynne—little Ida, who was your favorite."

Georgia made her introductions with a graceful cordiality of manner that was peculiarly her own, and that always placed both parties at their perfect ease.

Mr. Lexington was very fascinating in his courteous acceptance of the acquaintance of the friends his wife had made during his absence; he won the young people's hearts with his first words and low of greeting.

He renewed his former friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Hammond at the very point where it had been left severed by his departure.

And to Ida Wynne he turned with an outstretched arm that drew her closely to his side, as he kissed her forehead, to which the proud, shy, delighted blushes surged in pink waves.

"Can this possibly be the little girl who clamored for a ride on my shoulder, and who invariably rifled my pockets in search of bon-bons?"

Ida laughed merrily; a frank, candid laugh, that displayed her beautiful teeth and the dimple in either cheek.

"I think I must be that same girl, Mr. Lexington, from the fact that I still retain an inherent fondness of the bon-bons. Do you happen to have any?"

After the ice had fairly been broken, Georgia ordered an additional cover for Mr. Lexington, and the party finished their pleasantly interrupted breakfast, while a quiet, uneventful conversation flowed around the table, in which Georgia took her part, succeeding admirably in concealing the anguish and pride in her heart, that, not for worlds would she have discovered to the guests around her table.

Breakfast over, Mr. Lexington retired to the library, where he wrote a message and rang for a servant to take it to the telegraph office in the little depot.

It was a despatch to Frank Havelstock, and read:

"I shall remain at Tanglewood indefinitely. Come down at once for the season."

The servant withdrawn, Mr. Lexington began a nervous, restless promenade up and down the long, silent apartment, between rows of shelves that reached from the floor nearly to the ceiling, and which were ornamented on the top by rows of alternate marble and ebony busts. A soft, thick emerald carpet covered the floor, and muffled his footsteps as he walked to and fro past the large oval table, where stood a silver student lamp with its mellow hued glass globe. His face

wore a look of keenest pain; but on his mouth was the decided, almost defiant expression that had come there when his wife had repulsed his passionate overtures an hour before.

"And this is coming home—this the forgiveness I cheated myself for years with believing I would meet. This the tender, delicate reception of the humbling of my manhood at the feet of the woman I worshiped as madly as man ever worshiped—who cares for me? nothing! Well, I'm at home, and I shall not leave it again; thanks to Mrs. Lexington, our infelicity is our secret, and there remains to me only a barren, lonely life of it, as shut off as if I were on Africa's arid deserts again. But, I'll have Frank down—Georgia used to hate him so; and I'll make Ida Wynne my friend, and get the most out of my shattered life I can."

He threw back his handsome hair, and walked out of the library, and met Georgia in the hall.

"I was coming to ask you if you preferred the blue suite of rooms. They are in readiness when you wish to go to them."

He bowed coldly.

Thank you. My luggage will come when Frank does—be kind to have rooms prepared for him. You dine at what hour?"

A look of annoyance passed over Georgia's face.

"At seven. Do I understand you Mr. Havelstock is to be a guest at Tanglewood?"

"You understand aright. He has been in Egypt with me these past three years, and I learned to esteem him still more highly than in earlier days. A more noble, unselfish, generous-souled man does not exist than my cousin, Frank. As my guest and relative he will receive the hospitality of Tanglewood."

Georgia merely bowed her head slightly in acceptance of her commands, and then retraced her steps to her own boudoir, where she had received the information a few days earlier of her husband's expected arrival.

Her step was slow, almost dragging, as she entered the room; but she resolutely crushed the sigh she felt seeking vent, and smiled cordially at a sweet, upturned face that greeted her from the depths of a white lawn, ruffled, easy chair.

"Do forgive me for intruding, Mrs. Lexington, but I was so anxious to congratulate you on your splendid husband. I am completely fascinated, enchanted, infatuated, everything!"

Ida Wynne's bright face, lighted by her roguish eyes, was certainly a very fair sight to see; and Georgia thought, as she had before many and many a time, that if her baby had lived, she would have been in age such a girl as this.

"You are enthusiastic, my dear child—nineteen usually is, although I can, with moderation, admire your estimate of Mr. Lexington's attractions. However, you will be pleased to hear of a new arrival for to-morrow—I presume Mr. Havelstock, who has been out with Mr. Lexington."

"The dark, Spanish-looking gentleman, whose picture is in the musical album, opposite Neil Reynolds? Is he coming? Oh, that is just splendid, Mrs. Lexington"—and a mischievous gravity that struggled hard with smiles around the mouth, covered her face.

"Do you know I have a presentiment that in Mr. Havelstock I shall meet my fate?"

Georgia shivered at the idea—her fair, young friend and Frank Havelstock could not, should not have aught in common!

"He is a man of the world, dear," Georgia replied, very gently—her troubles had made her tender to her own sex—"and you an unsophisticated girl, who can not read character, as yet. Don't be in a hurry to find your fate in any man, for five years, yet."

"Five years yet! and I nineteen now! did you wait that long?"

The white, agonized look on Mrs. Lexington's face made the young girl spring from her chair.

"Do forgive me—oh please do! I am so stupid, and I am forever forgetting you were married before, and lost your darling little baby. Mrs. Lexington, I will never be so thoughtless again."

She would her white arms around Georgia's neck.

"You meant nothing, dear. Now isn't it time to dress for lunch? And will you stop in Mrs. Robinson's room, and leave the order for rooms to be prepared at once for Mr. Havelstock?"

Ida readily obeyed, and Georgia locked the door quietly after her.

She was almost suffering to be alone; and since she had met her husband in the early morning she had not had a minute in which to collect her thoughts and arrange her plans of action. She had thought it easy to decide that Theo Lexington's coming and presence should have no effect upon her or her actions. She had but one path in which to tread—the same straightforward path she had followed all her lonely years, when, at times, she had prayed wildly for something—anything to occur to break the horrid monotony. Now, her prayer was being strangely answered—for the monotonous routine was forever disturbed by her husband's coming—and Frank Havelstock's!

And she could not go on in her appointed way. Mr. Lexington's presence stirred her so strangely, made her so conscious of her loneliness, and to so yearningly long for the caresses of his arms—the kisses of his lips. She loved him—oh! she never had known how much, until the long absence had taught her, and the sudden return had added its proof. She felt in every fiber of her being that he was her lord and master—that his was the only hand which could control her destiny.

He had wronged her, terribly, in earlier days, and she knew, every day of her life, that if he had not been so cruel, that her hands and her heart and her life would not have been so empty; that in all those earlier years she would have had baby hands on her breast, in her hair, and a baby head nestling over her heart, and baby lips to have kissed when she would.

There would have been a tiny girl, a blushing maiden, all her own, and her life would have been full of such sweet, sacred harmonies. For Jessamine would not have died, at home, under her care—she could not have died with such ardent mother love enchainning her to this side the shore.

And Theo Lexington was accountable for all this desolation. She had brooded over it so often that it had become a passion with her—to hold him responsible, and never, never to forgive.

It had been comparatively easy when thousands of miles separated them, to remain stubbornly fixed behind her pride; it had been harder to keep herself to her promise when he stood before her, in all his flush of beauty and proud manhood, pleading his cause, and opening his arms to let her come.

But it was harder now, the excitement over, and knowing he was there, under the same

roof, and yet a stranger—nay, worse than a stranger. Georgia dreaded this coming of Frank Havelstock, with a vague foreboding she would not accept as fear, simply because she supposed her fate had already accomplished its worst for her; simply because she supposed her capacity for suffering had been filled.

And yet, there hung over her a shadow, even in those impalpable folds she discovered a strange, new dread, and, as Frank Havelstock was coming to Tanglewood, and was so thoroughly disliked and mistrusted by her, and as cordially beloved and confided in by her husband—these facts, together with the chance, girlish remarks of Ida Wynne, had all very naturally pointed to Frank Havelstock as the cause of her forebodings.

She walked to and fro through her suite of rooms, with the shadow and sunshine patches flickering across the velvet carpets as the wind moved the branches of the trees that grew along the entire side of the mansion, her mind filled with a wilder tumult of emotions than she thought ever could have torn her again—who had almost sworn to be an enemy and a stranger to her husband.

Yet, here, at the very onset, her woman's heart was asserting itself, and she was walking through very fires of longing love for the man whose old-time fascination had ever affected her so strongly.

She loved him! there was no use denying the truth to her hungry heart. Above all her pride, her outraged motherhood, her neglected wifehood, arose the triumphant cry—she loved him! and she knew that had Theo Lexington been the hand that crushed her to death, dying she must have said, "I love him."

This very moment she was within a hundred yards of him; she heard his footstep across the hall, in his own apartments, and occasionally his sweet voice as he addressed his man-servant; Georgia imagined just how he looked, just how he would look if she went to him, with yielding patience and candid confession of her pride; how his arms would clasp her, his lips kiss hers. A soft, sweet light gathered in her blue eyes; a tremulous smile flitted around her exquisite mouth, as she stood one moment in silent indecision—then, mighty love conquered years of coldness.

"I will go to him—not now, oh! I dare not go now; but to-morrow, to-morrow!"

The glad tears overflowed her eyes, and streamed in a crystal tide over her face. She let them come as they would, laughing in very ecstasy of heart: that such a sudden, blissful change had come over her—that there was promise yet of happiness even for her!

That-moment she heard the footman tap on her door.

"Mr. Havelstock, madam."

(To be continued.)

"EPISODE."

Love has come and gone again;
Love was bound and we were free;
Love beloved of wiser men,
Never stays too long with me.

This was just the golden hour!
Since the shadow of regret—
Odor of a faded flower—
Sweetens my resentment yet.

When it seems no sin to say
"All my love I dare not tell!"
Could I then foresee this day?
While I loved, I loved you well.

Yet, though love's enchanting speech
Breaks no longer on my mouth,
All hope's silence shall not teach
Alien sadness to the South.

Seas shall sing, though lips be dumb;
Winters laugh with leaping streams;
Amber fields of summer come,
Smiling, spite of haggard dreams.

I shall find what peace there is
Sweetheart lost, adieu, adieu!
Lips of mine you will not miss;
Other loves will comfort you.

Nick Whiffles' Pet: OR, NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.

CHAPTER X.

DOOMED.

IT WAS like the fabled siren of old, Hugh Bandman seemed literally powerless to resist the impulse to approach that wonderful personage known as the Phantom Princess.

The voice, naturally of the tenderest sweetness, had every accessory to make it impressive in the highest degree. The silent river, with the somber woods on every hand, the silvery moonlight, and the mystery which superstition had thrown about her; all these, added to the peculiarly nervous condition of the trapper, tended to heighten what at any time would have produced a powerful effect.

Bandman, as I said, plied his paddle as he had never plied it before. It was with the feeling that he would overtake and look more clearly upon her face, even if it cost him his life.

He saw, too, after going a short distance in this furious manner, that he was really gaining upon the Princess—very slowly, it is true, but unmistakably nevertheless. She, too, was using her oar with extraordinary power, and the two boats shot forward with surprising velocity.

The canoes were as near the center of the stream as might be, and each was heading straight down the river. Despite the extraordinary efforts of the fugitive, the voice seemed to float over the water with undiminished sweetness.

All at once it changed—changed so suddenly and so radically as to be startling. The sad, plaintive character was lost, and it took an exultant, joyous strain, as if the singer was triumphant over some trouble that had long distressed her.

Different as it was in every respect, except in the wonderful sweetness of its tones, it had, if possible, a far more powerful attraction to the maddened pursuer. Had she really desired him to overtake her, she could scarcely have taken a surer means of doing it; for the distance now steadily diminished until less than fifty yards separated them, and every thing indicated a speedy termination of the race.

At this juncture an alarming phase of the contest manifested itself. Had a person stood upon shore, and watched the two boats, he would have discovered a third, some distance in the rear of the second. This was much larger than either, and in it were seated five Blackfoot warriors of the fiercest and most treacherous character.

The trapper saw them not, and if he had, he scarcely would have heeded them; but they were drawing near him, with the swift, stealthy, and sure approach of the panther upon its sleeping victim.

Was the Princess growing weary? Certainly her stroke was losing its quick

elasticity, and her pursuer was gaining at a faster rate than before. Bandman even began to slacken his own speed, so as not to overtake her too rapidly.

Sure now of coming up with the mysterious woman, a strange fluttering took possession of the trapper. Long years of danger and severe mental suffering, had given him a stoicism and mastery over his emotions such as a Blackfoot himself might have coveted, but he was now awayed by feeling such as he had not known for a long, long time.

"Strange! strange! can it be?" he kept muttering, leaning forward, and straining his vision to get a nearer view of the female.

He had discovered some time before that there was a second figure in the boat, but he paid no heed to that. His whole attention and mind were centered upon her—her—the Phantom Princess.

Stroke by stroke he advanced, until scarcely a score of feet separated the two boats. Then the trapper paused rowing, in doubt what was best for him to do.

She had ceased singing and paddling, and sat motionless in her boat, quietly contemplating him, with turned head and motionless arms.

At the same time that Bandman stopped his efforts, the Indians, a hundred yards in the rear, did the same, and began stealing along, nearer and nearer, resembling still more the insidious approach of the panther to its unconscious victim.

Bandman was sitting motionless, scarcely knowing what to do, and yet gradually drawing nearer, when the Phantom Princess spoke.

"Why have you pursued me?"

"To find out who you are," was the instant response of the trapper, who appeared to rouse from his spell by the voice of the charmer.

"Have you never heard of me before?"

"I have heard you called Phantom Princess. Do you live among the Indians?"

"I saw you and your friends at our village the other day, when you came after furs. "Were you there?" continued Hugh, his earnestness making his questions more pointed than otherwise they would have been.

"I sat in my lodge, with my daughter, and we watched you until you went away."

"Why did you not let us see you?"

"We are seen—or I am only seen—at night, by your people."

"That is a strange fancy—may I ask why it is?"

"You will learn before you return."

There was a significance in these words which Hugh Bandman would have noticed at any other time; but, half wild, with all sorts of conflicting thoughts, he was in doubt at times whether he was acting in a dream or a reality.

Scarcely without knowing it himself, Bandman was so toying with his paddle that he was drifting closer, and closer to the white canoe. Close as he already was, he was unable to gain anything like a fair view of her face and features, as she held them shaded in such a way that it was impossible.

There was a wild, maddening, distracting suspicion still controlling and urging the trapper onward. More than once the deciding question was upon his tongue, but he forced it back.

"You are a long ways from your home," said he.

"I have been many miles further," she answered, "and have never yet lost my way."

"You are not a Blackfoot; you have once lived somewhere else among civilized people. How long have you been with the Indians?"

"This question was unanswered. For some reason or other, the Princess declined to say anything at all. Her silence first reminded the trapper that he was asking some questions without any authority, and with little regard to propriety.

Still, in a certain sense, he was desperate, and he continued:

"May I ask your name?"

"You mentioned it yourself a few minutes ago."

"The Phantom Princess is a title—not a name," she said, "and you know that I am known among the white people and my adopted kindred."

"Have you your daughter with you?"

"A beautiful Indian name—Miona."

"A beautiful Indian name—are you now returning to your home in the village?"

"I am," she said, "and I intend to go with me."

making any such attempt. There was a moment, when life was never so precious to him—and it was when that wild, delirious hope was leading him on.

That had passed, and dull despair had succeeded. He was indifferent to what became of him.

"I have carried the burden of life a long time, until it has no more attractions for me and I may as well lay it down in this solitude as among my own kindred. On the broad earth there is no one who cares for me."

This was a sad wall to utter, but Bandman felt it, as he resignedly folded his arms and remained quiescent in the power of his captors.

The Indians seemed to have no appreciation of the sentimental, and they kept steadily on, with that deliberation of movement seen when oarsmen are conscious they have started upon a long journey.

Besides the mental depression, a sort of physical exhaustion succeeded the undisturbed repose under which the trapper had been laboring, and a sort of drowsy stupor came over him, and lulled by the soft, gliding motion of the boat, his head drooped upon his breast and he sunk into a dreamful slumber.

Several times he opened his eyes, but it was only to hear the regular sweep of the Indian paddles, and to see the dusky figures of his captors very near him. Once he roused enough to recognize the dark line of wood along shore, and to see the full, round moon riding high in the sky, and shedding its silvery radiance over the stream.

Then he sunk off into slumber again and did not arouse until it was broad daylight around him.

Scarcely any halt was made by the Blackfeet during the succeeding day, and Bandman, wrapped in his own meditations, did not attempt to exchange a word with them, in the broken English which they occasionally used in speaking, as though they were inviting him to say something.

Not a mouthful of food was partaken by any member of the party during the entire day. When thirsty, the trapper dipped his hand in the water beside the canoe, and scooped up enough to slake his thirst.

Just at midnight, the village was reached. The arrival of a prisoner caused very little excitement. Several gathered around the white man, but no violence was offered him, and he was conducted to a lodge near the center of the town, into which he was ushered, and then left entirely alone.

Naturally the captive looked about at his surroundings. The building was a powerfully constructed one, quite small, with a bundle of ropes in one end, and upon a sort of stump near the middle, burned a light of oil, rudely made, but serving to illuminate the interior quite well.

Upon the same stand lay some cooked meat, and a sort of gourd of water. Indeed, the appearance of everything indicated that preparation had been made for receiving the prisoner. The Phantom Princess had doubtless preceded the coming of the white man, by several hours, and had seen that things had been put in a shape for him.

"Doubtless this den has been used for the same purpose before," concluded Hugh, as he gazed wonderingly about him; "here the prisoners that she has lured to their destruction are placed, and perhaps given a little time to prepare for death."

Frightful as was the situation of the trapper, he did not need the sight of the food to remind him that he was half-famished. He attacked it with such vigor, that when he had finished, nothing but a few scraps of bones remained.

His hunger satiated, something like a reaction came to Bandman, and a new desire for life came to him. Reclining upon the pile of buffalo-hides, he endeavored to think seriously of his situation. He was so cramped from sitting in one position so long in the canoe, that he stretched out flat upon his back and looked up to the rugged ceiling of poles and bark overhead.

"Here I am," he mused; "there can be no doubt that I am intended for death, and I see no earthly prospect of escape."

Then turning his head toward the opening through which he had entered, he added, in the same musing tone:

"I am not bound, and it would be very easy for me to spring to my feet and dash out into the open air; but, of course, this lodge is under the surveillance of more than one pair of eyes, and I could not get a dozen steps away without being caught, and no doubt subjected to great indignity."

Rolling his head back, he closed his eyes. "It was her wish," she planned from the beginning to draw me into this, and how well she has succeeded. Her manner assures me that she has done this thing more than once, how many hapless beings have spent their last hours here!

"She must be insane, and must hold a powerful influence over these Indians; that doubtless is the reason she is called a princess, and then her way of dressing in white and painting her canoe that color, and her extraordinary skill in handling the paddle, have given her the name of the Phantom Princess among the superstitious hunters and trappers of this region."

Then he suddenly thought of the company of North-west trappers that had gone ahead of him to this village. What had become of them? Most likely, after finding that they had been outwitted, they had continued on down the river, knowing it was too late to return, and overtake the offending party that had discomfited them.

Again his thoughts came back to her who was the cause of this calamity of his.

"There is a method in insanity, and there must have been some powerful cause to turn her mind in this direction. She must have received some terrible wrong at the hands of her people to cause her to turn with such implacable hatred upon them."

"Who can she be?"

"She would not give me her name. All I know is that she has a child with her, whom she claims as her daughter. Where, then, is the father of the girl? Can it be that his treatment of her was such as to change her feelings toward all her race, and to cause so many innocent to suffer?"

"So it seems to me," he added, as he continued the train of thought—"Sh!"

A slight rustling caused him to turn his head; the Phantom Princess was before him!

CHAPTER XII.

FACE TO FACE IN THE DEATH-LODGE. HUGH BANDMAN sprang to his feet, and confronted the woman who had entered the lodge. She was pale, and quivering like an aspen, while she stood as immobile as a statue of ice. He stared like a man who had lost his senses. His breath came through his closed teeth as though he were choking. He could only gasp, "My heavens!" and then he sunk back senseless upon the skins behind him.

The Phantom Princess still did not stir. She was dressed in the same wild, ghostly robes, and her large dark eyes were fixed upon him, as though they would pierce him through and through.

In a few minutes his strong nature reasserted itself, and he roused up again. Rising to a sitting position, he groaned:

"Oh, Myra! Myra! do I dream, or is it you indeed?"

Then she spoke, in the low, terrible tones of intense passion:

"Yes, it is I, Myra—she whom you once called your wife. I am not crazy, as you imagine. I saw you when you came with the party the other day; I knew you; I felt that my day of revenge had come; Providence had opened the way, and I knew that you would be thrown into my power. I followed you; I drew you on—and you are here; and when you leave this place, you go to your death!"

While she was speaking, she stood with hand uplifted, as though pronouncing judgment upon him. He could only reach his arms imploringly toward her, and moan his agony, which was too great for words.

"Your perfidy toward me has caused me to hate the face of all my race; and the hate of a dozen years is all centered upon YOU. It is I who brought you here—it is I who will delight in your suffering and death; let that thought fill your last moments upon earth. I now bid you good-by!"

With the air of an empress, she turned to walk out. She had reached the entrance, when the miserable man found his voice.

"Myra, wait one moment!"

"Well," she said, pausing and half turning round, but making no motion to return.

"Come back, I command you; you must listen to me."

"I can hear what you have to say without coming nearer you."

"If you are in your right mind, tell me—tell me, I implore—why you left me in London?"

"Tell you why I left you?" she repeated, her whole being consumed with scorn. "Why do you ask such an idle question? Must I refer to the time when you won my heart—when I gave you my love, and when I stood beside you at the altar, secretly but lawfully married, as I believed, in obedience to a request of yours; and then, when I discovered, a week later, that you had deceived me—that I was not your wife—can you wonder that I fled from you as from a pestilence?"

"Was that why you left me?"

"Was not that a thousand reasons? Disgraced, dishonored, was I to remain in London, with no friend in the world? No; God restrained me from suicide, but I left the country forever; I came upon my uncle's vessel to Fort Churchill; there I remained until my daughter was born, and then I fled into the woods. I found my way, after many weary days and nights of suffering, to these people. They had pity upon me; they treated me kindly, and with them I have lived ever since, and with them I expect to die. I have befriended no white man—none excepting Nick Whiffles, who is different from others of his race, and who was so kind to me that I can feel no hatred toward him."

"But I am the enemy of all others, and to no one am I an enemy as to you. You are now in my power; you have tasted of woman's love, and now you shall taste of a woman's hate!"

Quite suddenly, Hugh Bandman was now quite cool and self-possessed. It was an unnatural calm, but it was a calm, nevertheless.

"Myra, before bidding each other farewell," said he, as he leaned upon his elbow, "we may as well understand each other. I will answer any question you may propose, and will you do the same for me?"

"Let me hear them," she replied, standing as motionless as before, but the picture of the intensest excitement.

"By what means did you learn that you were not my wife?"

"What matters it how I learned it, so that I did learn it?"

"You have not answered me. Was it through Richard McCabe?"

"It was."

"What proof did he give you?"

"He brought me a note from the man who had acted the part of minister in marrying us. He repented the part he had played in being your agent, and begged me to do what I could not—forgive him."

"You did not see the man, Mr. Dumfries, himself?"

"He had not the courage to show his face—so he sent the note; that told all—was not that enough?"

"Did it ever occur to you that you might have been deceived—that Mr. Dumfries did not write or send you the note?"

"I do not know what you mean."

"To be brief, then, Mr. John Dumfries was a regularly-ordained minister of the Church of England; you are my lawful wife, and he never sent you a note or a word to the contrary."

"But I have the note with me," said she, turning about, and walking toward him.

"Let me see it," said Bandman, with that same wonderful coolness of manner, as he reached out his hand for it.

She hesitated for a moment, and then, walking a step or two nearer, flung it at him, as though she could not trust herself to approach any nearer.

"Were I in a civilized country, I would not trust you with it, but it can make no difference now."

Hugh Bandman picked up the folded bit of paper and opened it. It had been carefully preserved, and he read it without difficulty. When he had finished he folded it up again and threw it toward her.

"Just what I expected—that is in the handwriting of Richard McCabe, and he wrote it on purpose to destroy your happiness and mine."

"I will not believe it—it can not be true!" was the impetuous exclamation of the Phantom Princess, advancing still closer.

"Somehow or other, I have always fancied that you and I would meet again in this life, and I have always been prepared for it, as you will shortly perceive. Listen, then, Myra, to a few words of mine."

"Richard McCabe was an admirer and lover of yours before I saw you. He did all he could to win you, but failing, and finding that you and I were plighted, he still sought to prevent our marriage. He went to you with whisperings against me, but you scorned him; he came to me with insinuations against you, and I thrust him out of the house. I thought that that was the last of him, so far as concerned us, but it was not. A week after our marriage, I came home one evening to find that you had fled. You had left no word of explanation behind you, so that I had not the slightest suspicion of why or where you had gone. I could only believe that you had gone off in some mental aberration, and a number

of the best detectives were put upon your track. They learned nothing of what had become of you, and I came to the conclusion that you were dead in the Thames."

"Not the slightest suspicion of the true cause of your absence had come to me. My marriage was a secret from my friends for the simple reason that I lacked a few months of reaching my majority, and was not yet legally my own master. A few of my intimate friends were in the secret, and one evening when McCabe was rather the worse for the wine he had drank, he said something that roused the most dreadful suspicion in my mind. I could not get much out of him, but enough to satisfy me that you were hiding somewhere, under the belief that I had done you some great wrong."

"The few words that I got from him were uttered accidentally. When he was himself I taxed him with it, but he had no recollection of what he had said, and denied all knowledge of you in the most solemn manner. Nevertheless, his appearance convinced me of his guilt, and I employed a man to watch."

"McCabe did not know at this time whether you had gone, but he had a suspicion, and he discovered it at last, and he followed you. When my man found that he had embarked for North America in one of the Hudson Bay Company ships, he became satisfied that you had done some weeks before."

"When he told me this, I remembered you had an uncle who was the captain of one of their vessels, and there could no longer be any doubt of the direction you had taken. Prudence would have suggested that I wait until his return, and learn the truth from him, but that would have necessitated a delay of several months, which would have driven me mad, so I set sail in the very next vessel that left for this country."

"We encountered the 'Albatross' as we entered Baffin's Bay, and I went on deck and saw your uncle. He told me his lips were sealed, and refused to answer me any questions at all, even after I had made him understand that you had been deceived."

"I had no doubt at all that you were at Fort Churchill, but I did hope to gain some particulars of him; but I did not, and so we separated."

"While entering Hudson's Bay we were caught in a tempest and wrecked. We lived on that barren coast for several months, and then were picked up and carried to Ungava. It was then a long time before I could get across to Fort Churchill."

"I succeeded at last—but when I reached the place a year and more had passed since you left London."

"At Fort Churchill I learned that you had been there, and that a child had been born. You had received the kindest treatment, but when the short, beautiful summer came, you had escaped and fled no one knew whither."

"McCabe was dead; the miserable man had followed you to Fort Churchill, but one day, when hunting near the fort, he got caught in a snow-storm, and perished within a hundred yards of the gate of the fort."

"Then I set out to hunt for you. For two years I never ceased my search, except for a few hours, when exhausted nature compelled me to do so."

"The end of it all was that I learned nothing at all of you, and I agreed with Mackintosh, who knew my secret, that you and your child had perished somewhere in the wilderness. He wished me to return to England, as he thought the change would benefit me; but life had now lost its charms for me, and I was willing to die here. I refused to go, and engaged as an ordinary trapper upon him."

"Thus I have been employed ever since. Once or twice during the past five years I heard of the Phantom Princess, but no suspicion of her identity came to me until within the past few days. This is the first time I ever accompanied Mackintosh to this village, and when I saw you I thought it barely possible that you might be my long-lost wife. You know what has followed."

"During this narration Myra had remained standing in the same immovable, statue-like position, while Bandman sat upon the pile of skins, talking as calmly as though he were discussing some ordinary business matter. He now rose to his feet and advanced nearer."

"That you may not doubt my word I have always carried the proof with me."

"With which he drew a package from his inner breast-pocket, and handed it to her. She took it mechanically and opened it."

She had read it carefully, and saw that it was a legal certificate of her marriage, properly witnessed, and signed by Rev. Mr. Dumfries, who had officiated in the capacity of minister at the time."

All this she saw. Then that wild, fierce light, born of long suffering and hate, died out, and in its stead, came a deadly pallor to the face—the pallor of despair. A cry bubbled up from her lips like that of a mother over her lost darling. Her arm, outstretched, moved, and for a moment she seemed to have moved, and her staring eyes glared in their intense gaze on vacancy, as she walked:

"Doomed—doomed! and by my act! Oh, Hugh—dear Hugh! My hand has brought him to this—my hand!" she sobbed, holding out before her that beautiful white band.

"He never wronged me—he loved me all through these dreadful years—he sought me out in these wilds to say that he loved me, and I lured him on—to the Death Lodge—to the Death Lodge—I, his wife!"

The hand moved in air again; then she stood like one frozen in her sorrow, still as the dead, for a moment only, then dropped to the ground as one dead indeed.

Her husband sprang toward her and lifted her head upon his lap. Fondly he kissed the lips again and again, pressed the head to his breast, and while his eyes rained tears, murmured:

"My wife—my own darling wife—united again, after all these long, cruel years. Myra, my own—my dearest. Poor, deceived Myra; I forgive all, and with death staring me in the face, I plead for your love."

Opening her eyes, she looked yearningly at him for a moment, and then reaching up her arms, closed them about his neck.

"My husband!"

Their hearts were too full to speak further, and for several minutes they could only mingle their tears. Then they sat side by side and talked for a few moments, when Myra said:

"You are condemned to death, dearest Hugh; there is no escape for you, but I will die with you; that at least shall be my explanation. Oh, the wrong I have done! Alas, that, now that I have found out what life is, it should be so soon ended!"

"Perhaps there is happiness yet for us; you are free to move about, without question; go and see Nick Whiffles."

"I will do so, at once!" she exclaimed, springing to her feet. "He shall save you—save you, Hugh! God has sent him to this wilderness for this work—to save you, my husband!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 295.)

AUTUMN'S LAST ROSARY.

The squirrel gloats over his accomplished hoard. The ants have brimmed their garner with ripe grain.

And honey-bees have stored The sweets of summer in their luscious cells: The swallows all have winged across the main; But here the autumn melancholy dwells, And sighs her tenuous spells Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.

Alone, alone, Upon a mossy stone, She sits and reckons up the dead and gone, With the last leaves for a love rosary. While all the withered world looks drearily, Like a dim picture of the drowned past In the hushed mind mysterious far-away, Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last Into that distance, gray upon the gray.

The Way the River Ran.

BY ABBIE CLEMENS MORROW.

"The way the river ran, the way the river ran," she repeats, over and over again, standing on the turf-bordered banks of the deep, rapid stream.

She is tall and shapely, and wondrous to look upon, as she lingers in statuesque repose where the ad-gold sunset light drifts over her, shimmering gorgeously against the flowing white robes that sweep softly down to the yellowing grasses. Her hair, like the purple blackness of a starless midsummer night, waves back from her olive brow, and falls a curling mass about her shoulders. Her face is like polished ivory, devoid of color save the scarlet gleam of her lips, tremulous, woful, heart-rending in their suggestion of despairing grief.

Her features—perfectly, ravishingly lovely—betray her a woman of Southern origin in their revelation of her fiery, passionate nature. Her eyes are those of some dumbly-stricken animal, an agonized appeal, a gathering gloom of horrible despair, in their startled depths.

The river runs through farmlands and orchards and outlying meadows, over golden sands, away down to the embrace of the ocean waves, the kiss of their white foam. Just here, back of the woman, in the borders of the fragrant old orchard, stands a cottage. Mosses and lichens fashion mosaics on the sloping eaves; shaded turf is all about its vine-carressed walls.

Five years before had married Hugo Le Maire, a wealthy, aristocratic Southerner, who had given her a loyal, all-absorbing devotion. For three years they had traveled among the fair and beautiful and renowned places of earth; then, recalled to the land of his nativity by the outbreaking of the rebellion, Mr. Le Maire had brought her, with her maid and child, to this quiet, picturesque Northern retreat, while he left her to seek glory and honor as a Confederate soldier. At first, after his absence, came long, loving, satisfying letters. Afterward these grew less and less frequent, and finally ceased altogether. The terrible suspense, the gnawing uncertainty, the weary, hopeless torture of inaction, these Mrs. Le Maire suffered.

One cold, cheerless October morning, the dreary monotony of her life was relieved by the arrival at the village of a young, talented Englishman, Sir Rochester, whose friendship they had formed while abroad, and who had come over with Mr. Le Maire to join the Southern army. Through him torturing doubts were merged into despairing certainty. He brought her news of her husband's death. He had seen him fall in battle, but, afterward, being himself severely wounded and conveyed to an hospital, had been unable to learn how or where his friend had been carried to his burial.

The alleviation to the sorrow-stricken woman's life after this was to sit in her little parlor and listen while Percy Rochester related, in his winning, cheery way, incidents concerning the hours spent with her husband on the bivouac and upon the march.

From the time of his introduction to Mrs. Le Maire, Sir Percy had given her a sincere, reverential admiration. Now that she was free and he was thrown constantly into communion with her, his friendship ripened into passion; he added to reverence an intense, worshipful devotion. Mrs. Le Maire, wholly absorbed in her grief, failed to detect Sir Rochester's passion, until one Summer evening he surprised her by a wild, eager avowal of love. Shudderingly, almost scornfully, she answered him:

"I cannot be your wife. I—"

"Oh! my darling! my empress! my idol! How I love you! Without you hope will fail, ambition die, life be but a dreary waste! Death will be welcome compared to an existence away from your idolized presence!"

"But," she said, moved by his passionate appeal, "I have no love to give you. Such marriage would be but mockery."

"Then let me teach you to love me. I have no kindred ties. I am the last of my race. I have only you. Give me the right to worship you, to devote my life to your happiness. I crave no sweeter bliss. Kiss me in token that you grant me this!"

She was so wholly miserable, she knew what loneliness and suffering were, her scarlet lips quivered, her dark, lustrous eyes filled; pity, twin-sister to love, conquered. Silently she bowed her royal head and let her lips rest on his in answer to his prayer.

Through the long summer days Sir Rochester was constant in his devotion to the woman he loved, and had the satisfaction of seeing the roses come back to her cheeks, the smile to her lips, and of knowing that if she was not wholly happy, she was restful and contented.

Mrs. Le Maire had one brother, Carl Eustad. Though an Alabamian, he had, unknown to her, joined the Northern army. Receiving a furlough he started North to visit his only sister. Carl Eustad reached the river-side one August day, just as darkness was falling on the sleepy meadow and the flowing river. As he stepped noiselessly over the shadowed turf—happy and light-hearted—a gentleman and lady came out from the cottage and walked arm-in-arm in an opposite direction. One he recognized as his sister, Marie, the other was a total stranger. He marveled when he saw their familiarity, but his hot Southern blood rioted in his veins when, coming nearer, he heard the gentleman say:

"Marie, darling, it is asking a sacrifice, but I must leave for Europe next week, and I cannot go without you."

The words wherewith the woman answered were lost to him, but when the stranger gathered his sister in his arms and kissed her, his wrath was at its fiercest, and drawing his revolver from his pocket, he fired at the man who had roused the tempest of his anger. Sir Rochester slipped from Mrs. Le Maire's embrace, and, without a moan, fell dead at her feet. She turned, and saw in the dusk a soldier's uniform, and, thinking it was her husband, living, come back to see her thus, and believe her treacherous, with a wild shriek, fell fainting at the feet of her dead.

"Oh, God! I have killed them both!" the

remorse-stricken murderer cried, and, turning, fled the way the river ran.

The autumn winds were lightly tossing their russet and yellow leaves over Sir Percy's grave, when Mrs. Le Maire arose from the couch on which she was laid when they found her unconscious by the side of her dead lover.

She stands in an attitude of despairing, heart-rending grief by the river's bank. She looks up to the azure, cloud-flecked sky; away to the dim, shadowy mountain-peaks; away to the bright, sun-reflected waters; and says ever, in the same mournful cadence:

"The way the river ran, the way the river ran."

The day wanes. The sun bids it farewell, and leaves a glory of amber, and scarlet, and purple. Mrs. Le Maire gathers her white, trailing robe about her, and goes softly to a slender willow whose branches shadow the water. She detaches a small boat, and taking a seat therein, floats away with the outgoing current, down to the treacherous sea.

"A spirit! a ghost!" the simple village-folk say, as, later, by the light of the up-coming moon, they see the little skiff, with its lonely, white-robed occupant. Further down, a skipper putting out to sea halts beside her, questioning. Her only answer is:

"I go to find him; the way the river ran!"

At last she slips wearily to the bottom of the boat, folds her arms on the rough seat, and dropping her tired, aching head upon them, sleeps while the wind and tide drift her unguided boat far seaward. As morning paints the east with glory, an English trading vessel, bound for a Southern port, spies the floating skiff and its strange burden. On being awakened, and learning their destination, Mrs. Le Maire willingly avails herself of their invitation to join them. They cruise along the Southern coast, but are unable to run the blockade, and the disappointed woman is obliged to accept the offer of the mate to leave her on an island near the mainland.

The war is ended. Mr. Le Maire has battled with a reckless regard for life. He has gained the highest honors for courage and bravery, but he values them lightly since he believes that the one for whose sake life and renown were valuable to him, could betray his honor and lavish upon another the love due to him. With no tie now to bind him to his birth-land, he embarks for the old world. Just outside the harbor a slight accident compels the vessel to halt near a rock-reef for repairs. Restless, unhappy, Hugo Le Maire wanders past the few unattractive cottages' houses. At the window of one of these he sees the face of the woman he hoped never to look upon again in this world, but passes on with no sign of recognition.

Mrs. Le Maire, with a quick, glad cry, crosses the room, throws open the door, and hurries after him, beseeching, breathlessly:

"Oh, Hugo! my husband!"

He turns, and, while his heart throbs, quickly says, very coldly:

"Madame, you have no right to speak to me thus! There are sins love cannot pity or pardon!"

"Yes, but mine was not of them!"

"Perhaps I can better judge of that than you."

"Oh, Hugo! if you had but given me one word before you fired that fatal shot, how—"

"You are laboring under a mistake. I did not shoot Sir Percy. It was your brother."

"My brother? Carl! How?"

"After I recovered from the illness which followed the wound I received in my first engagement, I discovered Carl among the prisoners, released him, and sent him north to bring me knowledge of you."

"And he?"

"Did not return to me with his shameful story, but joined his regiment. Afterward in the midst of a battle I found him wounded unto death, and drew from him the story of your wrong and his revenge. He believed he had killed you both. I went north for my child, and they told me of Percy's death and that your grief for him had—"

"For him! Oh, Hugo! and you believed it?"

"Your role of innocent is very well assumed, but I am not to be moved by it. Good-morning."

"My husband! my love! listen to me! look at me! In the old days when you knew me so well, did I ever deceive you? I have never wronged you as you think. Sir Percy brought me news of your death. He had seen you fall. Only God knows how I missed you and mourned for you! For weeks he came every day and talked to me of you. When at length he asked me to marry him, I had no love to give him, and told him so; but life was so worthless, so wretched to me without you, I—"

He hears the words which give her back to him, pure and unshattered, and with a great cry of rapture, catches her in a close, clinging embrace, while tears that in all the hours of his keenest anguish never dimmed his eyes, mingle with the kisses he rains upon her pure, beautiful, sparkling face.

"Oh, my darling! how I have wronged you! God forgive me, that I doubted. How you must have suffered!"

"Your first thought is still as it always used to be, for me."

"And the rest of my life shall be one long thought and care for you, my precious! my wife!"

EARLY LOVE.—Men ridicule the early loves of others; but their own never appear ridiculous to themselves.

Women are more considerate; love to them, at every age, seems divine. For whatever else they may have contempt, they have none for true affection, from infancy to old age.

And the earliest loves, the loves of boys and girls, of mere children as it were, are often of the most serious and lasting nature. They survive all other changes, and end only—if they do end there—in the grave.

It is very true that many a man can count the sweethearts he has had upon his ten fingers, and then not number them all, as many a woman can her devoted beaux; and all of these are cast aside finally to marry some one else.

But this is by no means always, nor is it generally the case. Early love is more apt than any other to be enduring; and many a husband and many a wife who make marriages of convenience, could they know how the caresses which they receive are in reality

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IN THE

LAND OF THE ELEPHANT RIDERS!

Sunshine Papers.

Mustard—Considered Suggestively.

LONG live the estimable Pierre Blot, to lecture upon *cuisine* and help distressed housekeepers to a knowledge of what their market should produce upon their tables appropriately with each several month of the year! Long live he, and may no uninitiated person presume to improve upon his maddeningly-tempting, woefully-expensive, often impossible menu. Least of all should a parson's daughter, who is only supposed to understand how to make a leg of mutton last longer than ever any of its fellows were known to do, and how to set out a nice meal for unexpected guests with nothing in the house but faith and cold water, contemplate such frightful audacity. When I announce a suggestive consideration of mustard, do not imagine that I am electing myself to the office of assistant to the incomparable suggester, or advertising agent for any particular brand of that piquant condiment, mustard, or flattering myself that I can add to your appreciation of its taste upon those edibles that are perfected by a dash of spicy flavor.

I am only thinking how it relishes with a delicate slice of cold roast beef, how delicious is a bit of cauliflower or an olive drawn from its yellow depths, how utterly unpalatable would be an ever so wonderfully concocted salad devoid of its flavor.

It is good—I am positive I hear unanimous assent—but is it not odd that we disliked it in our weeset years? Do you remember when you wanted to try a bit, and mother said you would not like it, but in a fit of contrariness you insisted upon having your own way? How the full hot tears rushed to your wide-opened eyes and dripped over your quickly-flushed cheeks, and your mouth would not stay shut on the fire that seemed kindled inside it, and you applied suction of cold air and taste of cool water to your burning throat.

It was years before you came to like it, relish it, crave it at last. With days of work or study, and nights of gayety and excitement, and experience of lassitude and indifferent appetite, you learn to appreciate a little sharp flavoring. With the years mustard loses its sting to the taste. And when one does learn how piquant it makes very ordinary dishes, how soon it becomes a necessity to tempt the appetite! How the command "smack" his lips at its flavor with tainted gamel! How unacceptable are plain, nutritious meals without some sharp seasoning! How palled the taste becomes, after a time, save to the stimulants of highly-spiced food!

And yet we acquire the taste for spice innocently enough at first, and as it increases to a necessity seems it not still always a harmless taste? And so with the spice that we put into our lives, is it not always innocent; innocent no matter what degree of intensity it assumes to meet the demands of our ever-increasing love of it, and desire for its stimulating influence? For we do put spice into our lives, the best of us. Observation has proved most conclusively that we relish mustard in our lives as heartily as upon our cold meats—only the mustard necessary to make our daily avocations palatable is a little dash of sin. Not that we acknowledge the spice we love is sin! Ah! no; otherwise how could we satisfy our selves of our innocence?

Some one once said, "How delicious it would be to drink cold water if it only was forbidden us!" So are we always sighing for a little flavoring of sin to give a spiciness to our lives. In our childhood the piquancy of sin bites and stings us like the piquancy of the mustard; we do not relish the doubtful acts that bring the punishment of heartache, of tormenting conscience, of physical ailment; but as we advance in years we tell ourselves that such and such acts are but innocent amusements; the mustard loses the painfulness of its sting; we only like its pungent flavor. We grow to crave the stimulant of reading doubtful books, of engaging in doubtful occupations.

The business man must have mustard in his business to make it palatable. He has no appetite for plain, wholesome, unseasoned methods of acquiring wealth. He likes a dash of misrepresentation, of sharp practice, of illegality, of speculation, in it. The professional man likes his avocation spiced with slander of his fellows, with chicanery and bribes. The politician likes a flavor to his life of secret measures, of perjury, and of back-pay.

Everywhere in the world mustard is seasoning life; and not in the world alone, but in the church. Is a church to be built, a debt to be paid, money to be raised for heathen at home or abroad or in Sunday schools, how are the funds raised? Are there not fairs, festivals, tea-meetings, where every form of cheating and gambling is presented to the taste—not spiced too high, of course? Are there not legalized lotteries; and tableaux; and dramatic representations, that just stimulate the taste for a trifle higher-seasoned ones that the committee would frown upon in holy horror? By the way, that recalls the remark of a severely good woman who wore plumes in her hat, but reproved a younger sister of the church for wearing flowers. "But you wear feathers," said the younger lady, in amusement. "Yes, but the line must be drawn somewhere, and I

draw mine at feathers," said Sister Strict, dictatorially. And, seeing the universality of mustard-using—alike throughout world and church—is it not rather laughable where some people draw the line between right and wrong?

Cowper, who pithily remarked that

"Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor—"

might well have particularized a trifle more. However, I feel convinced that, had the gentleman lived to make my acquaintance, he would have approved my interpretation of his aphorism. A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

Chat.—As soon as an author shows sign of having nothing new to tell, and betrays to our editor's sharp eyes evidence of non-increasing merit, we just quietly run out of that author's stories. No writer can become so valuable to us that we cannot say "No" to an inferior or weak production, and when what we have rejected appears elsewhere as "a most remarkable story by a celebrated author"—why, we smile, and envy neither the author nor his publisher. We mean to have only the best by the best; when we cannot get that, we will go to stealing from the English papers and calling it original.

We have on hand, for early use, stories by Oil Coomes, Buffalo Bill and C. D. Clark. That by the latter is a new series of papers of combined adventure, romance and sport, viz.: "The Yankee Boys in Ceylon." In his "Seal-Hunters," "Camp and Canoe," "Snow-Hunters," etc., etc., the readers of the SATURDAY JOURNAL had perfect gems of the story of adventure; and to say that the "Yankee Boys in Ceylon" is equal in interest to any of those named, is quite enough to excite the pleasing expectancy of a great constituency of the boys who are to be the future men of America.

A REMINDER.—The "comity and amity of trade" has not prevented a certain boy's paper from using the title of "Lance and Lasso" to one of its serials. As this title was original with, and popularized by, the SATURDAY JOURNAL, this adoption is of course a violation of copyright as well as likely to mislead readers, who doubtless will expect to see in it a revival of the characters of the original story. The announcement elsewhere made, of the sequel story, by Captain Whittaker, will give the boys what they have so long anticipated—a reappearance of the boy hunters and adventurers in new scenes and strange lands. This item is to caution readers against what seems to be an attempt to capture a small portion of Capt. Whittaker's popularity by an author who has not a tithe of his popularity and merit.

In Mr. Badger's delightfully original and striking "Pacific Pen"—now running through these columns—we have an "American Romance" in the truest sense, and are presented a full dozen of characters that would do honor to any living writer. Bret Harte may study "Old Business," for instance, and learn something. He never conceived or presented a man so wholly original in act, talk and character. Odd, uncouth, and apparently wholly untutored—reckless, unfinching and irresponsible in running into danger—subtle, artful and dissembling—we are given as it were a man of threefold existence, and when the *de-nouement* comes and the man steps forward in his only true personality, we equally admire the author's skill in the construction of his mystery and the unsurpassed interest which he throws around every step of the actor through the wild, fierce, yet passionate and tender drama.

The parlor drama and amateur stage are an inexpensive and a deeply-absorbing species of entertainment. They enlist attention and study; they excite ambition and desire to please to a degree which soon gives tone to the participant's character, and starts mind, body and tastes in new and healthful channels. They breed, too, a more intimate knowledge of the affections and passions, and bring young men and young women into relations that give them clearer conceptions of their own natures and sympathies.

Such an instrumental surely ought to be used largely and generously by parents; and public educators, who are canvassing for means to an end, will find in the parlor and exhibition drama an adjunct which they can ill afford to slight.

The recent issue, by Beadle and Adams, of READINGS AND DRAMAS places a volume within reach of all that possesses remarkable excellence. Its Readings embrace numerous "Stage Classics"—noted pieces for recitation and declamation, carefully annotated and with directions which will greatly aid in their successful delivery. In DRAMAS it indeed offers a brilliant array for the Parlor, Exhibition, and the Amateur Stage. Largely humorous and "taking," they are especially adapted, in dress, furniture and situations, to the need so generally felt of available and effective minor dramas. The volume—elsewhere advertised—is commended to the attention of all who are interested in this delightful species of entertainment and improvement.

A RAINY DAY.

"The day is cold, and dark and dreary,
It rains, and the rain is never weary.
The wind still clangs to the molding wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary."

So goes the song. It has a sad refrain, and, doubtless, its author felt sad when he wrote it. But I think we make such days duller and more somber by sitting and thinking of the dreariness outside, and paying no attention to the warmth and comfort within. I rarely find such days dull. I quite love them, and never murmur at their coming. A rainy day is a very nice time to look over one's correspondence, and to write up the letters we are owing. We can draw up our chair and table before the fire and write a good long letter to some near and dear friend. There's pleasure enough in that to last quite a while. It will be good employment, and, if you are one of a melancholy temperament, it will drive away the blues, and make you feel more cheerful. The rain may beat, and the wind may sigh, but your heart will be away in the distance, where some one is waiting and watching for that letter you are inditing; will welcome it as we welcome the sunshine, and kiss it as though it were the writer.

Don't forget to write these letters on rainy days, if you cannot find an opportunity at another time. It will keep you from drifting apart from those whom you love, and those who love you. Did you ever think what it was to drift apart? An unanswered letter, an unreturned call, a fancied slight, causes many of us to drift apart. We commence life in an ocean, as it were; like two straws, we come in con-

tact with each other. One current takes one one way, and another current another, parting, parting. The whirlpool drags us in and we are lost to each other until the last great day. To avoid such interruption of friendship, we can keep up our correspondence, and thus keep our friends.

There is one capital thing about a rainy day that I like. It keeps the gossips home, and that is a consummation at which one ought to rejoice. Is it not splendid to know that a whole day will pass, and no one will intrude upon your privacy with backbiting and gossiping? Now, if rainy days will prevent all this, must we not consider rainy days especial blessings?

The rain no doubt has a melancholy cadence in its tones to some, but not so to me. I know it is doing good, and will refresh the earth. I can look out and watch the drops as they patter against the window and think how much better nature will be for a welcome shower.

God sends the rain as well as the sunshine, and we should receive it cheerfully as it comes from His hands.

The rainy day will serve as a good time to rummage over the old clothes we have put away, to mend them up and give them to the poor. I don't think it is just the thing to give clothes that are torn to the needy, who rarely have the time to mend them themselves, and, by wearing them unmended, give them a very untidy and slovenly look; besides, the garments are not so serviceable, and will not wear the same length of time.

Can't you find time on a rainy day to mix up a good batch of bread and goodies to send to some needy person?

There are so many ways in which one can employ their time on these dull days, that the wonder to me is how anybody can find them dull. We can improve ourselves in various ways, and everybody knows that we stand in need of improvement? We can brush up our grammar or spelling. The spelling matches have proved how woefully deficient we are in the latter.

We can do all this and not find time hang heavy on our hands. The hours will slip by only too quickly, and we shall wonder where the time has gone. A rainy day should be no excuse for idling away our hours.

What matters it, then, if the day is cold, when our hearts are warm? Who should care for the dark and dreary aspect outside when it is light and cheery within? If the rain is never weary we will never grow tired. Let the dead leaves fall; let us be thankful that we are alive and active. When there is so much to live and hope for, and so much to love, how can we ever be so wicked and ungrateful as to grumble at a rainy day?

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Stanley's Last Letter.

To Washington Whitehorn, Esq.:

DEAR SIR: I am sitting on the 5th parallel of latitude to write you this letter, which will be sent to the nearest railroad station: the mails here are not regular, and I haven't heard from you for several days.

I am here in the very center of Africa, and can't see across either way, even if I get up on the fence. There is a great deal of country in some parts of Africa, I find, and the further I go the more of it I see.

I set out on this second expedition, consisting of a thousand men, for the express purpose of discovering something—I didn't know what—and to conquer Africa. We had a great many battles to fight, in which I lost the greater part of my men; such battles as were never heard of before. Millions were slain, and millions were taken prisoners, and set to work picking the burrs off of my breeches. I might say that my quartermaster and I fought every step of the way. In every battle I came out covered with glory and fleas.

When I neared old King Cole's capital he came out in royal magnificence to meet me, riding on a rail, and smoking his corn-cob pipe in serene majesty.

He tendered me the freedom of the city, and offered to make me a present of all his wives and his grandmother.

His speech was quite characteristic. I replied in a speech of a very complimentary character, and then we sat down to an elegant feast of roasted monkeys and stewed anaconda. The festivities of the day wound up with a grand ball in our honor, in which the belles of the city tripped the dark fantastic toe. When we left I presented him with half a pair of pants, the first suit he ever had. We wrung each other's necks and parted in tears.

We didn't discover the great lake of Nianza until we were half-way across it. It is a big lake. We sounded it with a club, and it had a good ring. It is very wet, and it is a good thing to take the dirt off one's face, if you prefer to have it off. We always leave ours on, as it prevents sunburn. We launched the ironclad frigate which I had brought along in my trunk, and steamed for six months around its shores—though in some places it has no shores, which makes it a very peculiar body of water.

The water is not good to drink; at least, I have heard it so said by those who have tasted some of it.

The waters are a good deal higher than the surrounding country, so you will see it is a good place to come to start a bank. Bring a wheelbarrow and a jack of spades.

The sun is so hot here that the fish in this lake all carry umbrellas. This, you may think, is the biggest lie you ever heard, but if you object I will take the umbrellas down.

We had quite a battle, one day, on shore, with some apes who were well-armed with flint-lock muskets, and fought in regular military style, and came near defeating us, but they retreated with the loss of some thousands of tails.

In a storm our ship was capsized, and remained that way for a week, when another storm righted us.

The whales in this lake are so large they all have steam engines inside of them, with side-wheels, and every one has a Jonah for an engineer.

A race of giants we found on the west coast, thirteen feet high, without getting on the fence; they are so tall that they have to go down stairs to put on their sandals. They are so wide that every time they roll over in bed they fall out, and then down comes the house. They always pick their teeth with a fence-rail, and pull their boots off with the forks of a tree. You can sit down in the shade of one of them and cool off.

They are a good deal bigger than I ever felt in all my life. I also found a race of the most beautiful creatures I ever beheld, purely white. They said they belonged to the lost tribes, and covered me with thanks for finding them. I would have gladly bought a few for Barnum, but they were just out of extra ones.

I also came across another tribe which had not lost a member by death for several hundred years. This may seem strange, but every one I asked said he had never died yet, and begged me to prove it. Every one of them said they had known George Washington, and had trotted him on their knees when he was a boy.

So vast is this lake that you could drown all the spring poets in the United States in it. It is some thousands of miles long, and about the same in thickness. It would be a fine thing to set it up against the sky to dry. It is the largest body of water I ever fell in with, or into. The oldest residents say they well know when it was nothing but a little mud-puddle.

Finally, leaving the lake behind us, for want of transportation, what was left of us started out in search of anything we could find; but ere many months all my men either died or deserted, and I was the only one left. At present I am all alone in the woods here, and don't know where I am. Do you? I am looking for somebody to come along and tell me where I can find myself. I am lost so completely that I don't know which is east or which is west. This is such an isolated country that I guess there is no east or west here.

I have had several battles all by myself with hostile tribes of American voters in the raw, but always came off—ran off—victorious.

Now, I tell you what I would like for you to do: Fit out an expedition to come here in search of me. If I knew where I was I would tell you where to look for me, but I don't. I have been looking for myself for some weeks. I have met some natives, but they don't know where I am. Please advertise, "boy lost" in the *Herald*, and have it charged to me.

If you come here I will help you look for me, and assist you all that I can. Come a-whooping. I offer a reward of ten thousand dollars, and found. This is the best country to play hide and seek in that you can find. I'm out of change—even a change of clothes, and not a paper collar left! Bring a regiment of creditors—they can find a man easily enough. Hurry up and come down.

Yours Expectantly,

STANLEY.

Topics of the Time.

The maples in the forest glow;

On the lawn the fall flowers blaze;

The landscape has a purple haze;

My heart is filled with warmth and glow.

Like living coals the red leaves burn;

They fall—then turns the red to rust;

They crumble, like the coals, to dust.

Warm heart, must thou to ashes turn?

To lend a book and have it returned with the reader's views and observations annotated on the margins, is very annoying. Some of our best libraries are thus marred. It is an impudent liberty to take with another's property, and a sign of great egotism to thus obtrude your opinions, unasked, and of not the slightest importance to others. Our rule now is, in lending a book, to request that no marks of any nature whatever be made therein. If that reasonable request is disregarded—all right; we are excused thereafter from lending to that person. Book-borrowers ought to show their appreciation of the favor done by the book-lender by returning the book promptly, when read, unsold and unmarked by pencil or finger-marks. To lend to such readers is a pleasure. The book-borrower who takes no heed about the book and its early return is a nuisance that lenders will soon learn to say no to, when a volume is wanted. All of which is for the benefit of those concerned. If anybody is hurt charge the doctor's bill to the S. J.

The Los Angeles (Cal.) *Herald* says that at the present rate of increase it is estimated there will be in four years 1,000,000 stands of bees in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Bernardino counties, which will produce annually 100,000,000 pounds of honey, worth \$20,000,000, which is more than the value of the sugar and molasses crop of Louisiana, Texas and Florida combined, that is, providing honey can be sold at anything like present prices. It is now commanding, in the New York market, about twenty cents per pound, wholesale—a very extravagant figure for hard times.

"We know the public is down on us," remarked the old milkman, as he dipped out the cream from one of his big cans, "but the public is mistaken. In the first place we put in a little water—only a bit, to make up for shrinkage. It goes to the big dealers, and they ain't a bit keener when they get to pouring in water. They sell it to the grocers, and they put in chalk and soda, and water with the other, and they are thinking of politics and get in too much. The servant gal goes after milk for the family, drinks a third of it, and she puts in water to make up the measure; and, you see, when the family gets it the taste ain't there, the look ain't there, and they goes for us poor old men who haven't a dishonest hair in our heads. That's the way, mister—gee up there, Homer!"

The scientists and professors in Italy are still occupying themselves with the art of embalming and petrifying the bodies of animals—including man. Mazzini is in a state of petrification in his tomb at Genoa. The professors cite him as a grand success in this line of business. It certainly is a grand improvement over the practice in Italy of wiring up the body's skeleton and hanging it up in an underground gallery for exhibition or visitation. A perfect process of petrification for preserving the features of loved ones unimpaired, would be a precious boon.

The tramps again! Jones had prepared himself for a home dinner to a liking. He sat down in his dining-room at peace with all the world, and said, "Now, Hannah, bring the cold mutton. No hot meat for me this weather." Hannah hesitated for a minute, and said, "But I done give it away, sir." "Give it away! Give my dinner away?" "Yes, sir. You said if any tramps called I was to give them the cold shoulder." "Hang the tramps!" howled Jones, for it is evident that they didn't hang them, for as many sleep nightly in our barn as ever.

Coffee, now so generally used as a beverage throughout the whole civilized world, is of comparatively recent introduction. It first came from Arabia, where the coffee plant grew wild, but its value was unrecognized. The story goes that the superior of a monastery, desiring to keep the monks awake at their nocturnal services, made an infusion of the berry and compelled them to drink it—induced to do so by the shepherds' report of the exhilarating effect on the sheep that browsed on the berry. The monks soon sung the praises of coffee, and from thence the virtues of the berry spread, but it was two hundred years before it was known in Paris, where it was not used until about the year 1700. In the year 1714 a single coffee plant was taken to one of the French Islands in the West Indies, and from that single plant sprung the plantations which quickly developed into whole provinces, given up to the culture of the precious berry. The extent of the consumption of coffee is almost immeasurable. Like tobacco, it is everywhere sought for, even by the untutored savage. This country alone consumes over 80,000,000 pounds per year, at an importer's cost of \$15,000,000. That it is now, and for several years has been, selling at exorbitant price is due to the stupendous operations of a combination of importers who seize every cargo that comes to any of the great coffee ports, and control its sale, at their own prices—thus realizing great fortunes yearly. It is selling in England, France and Germany at about one-half the figures charged for it here. Our cheap money affords such facility for these gigantic trade combinations that the people must suffer so long as rag money is the "currency."

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. reserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosures, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. To all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving of each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of us.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Declined: "Plots;" "Wayward Water;" "At the Circus;" "The Old Spouse;" "A Tramp's Revenge;" "Aylesbury;" "A Tale with Cards;" "Smithers' Boy;" "Pumpkins in the Corn;" "Old Judd."

Accepted: "Two Caves;" "Vandyke's New Year Letter;" "Alexander;" "Stranded;" "An Hour's Masquerade;" "Miss Lancelotti's Maid;" "Only an Assistant;" "Ethel's Blunder."

H. L. D. Write to Harper & Brothers your complaint.

O. O. H. Nickel, pure, is a very soft metal.

MILLIE M. Very few journals pay for poems.

OPEN HAND. Use dog-skin gloves for street wear. Z. Z. The American Agriculturist is a monthly. Pismo. See answer to "New Subscriber, No. 1," below.

L. A. De V. Forwarded your note to the lady author.

H. M. D. You ask us to return your MS., yet inclose no stamps.

LESLIE. John Jacob Astor died long ago. William B. Astor, his son, who is a millionaire, lives in New York city.

PAUL N. J. The new series by C. D. Clark is both story and adventure. It is called "The Yankee Boys in Ceylon."

MISS E. N. A. The gentleman is unmarried. He writes regularly for us. Address him through this office.

ANDY JOHNSON. Ned Buntline is not now "playing"—having a poor one, we believe, from the stage. His real name is Hudson.

MISS K. T. Pearls are not desirable for wedding rings because they will not stand wear, and easily tarnish.

Mrs. HENRY B. Ready-made dresses are now to be had in numerous stores. Why not ready-made women's wear as well as ready-made men's clothing?

SAM. Baltimore. "Star" press is manufactured by J. M. Jones, Baltimore, Md.; the "Frouthy," by G. W. Safford & Co., 175 Washington street, Boston; the "Pearl" by Golding & Co., 14 Kilby street, Boston. Don't know the "Lowe" address.

FRED. W. Have no knowledge of the firm on Broad street. I don't think there is any connection between a young lady ought to be properly introduced before addressing a young man. If he knows that she wishes such introduction he should arrange it.

A New Subscriber, No. 1. Eruptions come from impure blood, or a greasy diet. Correct the diet and cleanse the blood. Bathe the face daily with carbolic glycerine. Take a powder, night and morning, made of sulphur (dissolved in drachm; carbonate soda, a scruple; tartarized antimony, 1/2 grain. Thoroughly bathe the whole body at least twice a week.

F. W. P. Indelible ink is made from several recipes. See the pharmacopoeia, in any drug-store. That most commonly used is to dissolve one drachm lunar caustic in one ounce of water already impregnated with a little alcohol. Write on the fabric previously prepared by an application of a weak solution of carbonate of soda, thickened with a little gum-arabic, which has been dried on the fabric previous to the use of the ink.

C. B. S. "The Wolf Demon," now out of print in the SATURDAY JOURNAL, cannot be reproduced in it, but will be given next spring as one of the "Sunshine Papers." The book is now published by Beadle and Adams.—No license is necessary to print visiting cards.

A. H. D. O. We are not aware of any peculiar homoeopathic process for making tincture of phosphorus. Tinctures are usually made by taking them through albumen paper. See the New Pharmacopoeia.

SPECIFICITY. Webster did compose his great speeches before seeing and committing them to memory. His memory was of astonishing tenacity. Henry Clay also composed all his best speeches and memorized them. Very few "off-hand" speeches are worth the hearing.

Mrs. THAD N. There is no "secret" at all in the production of the Saratoga fried potatoes. As served at Moon's "Lake House," the process is: Peel good-sized potatoes, cut them as evenly as possible; drop them into ice-water. Have a kettle of lard as for fried cakes, and very hot. Put a few at a time into a towel, shake them around to dry them, and then drop into the hot lard. Turn them occasionally, and when of a light brown take them out with a skimmer. If properly done they will not be at all greasy, but crisp without and mealy within.

"INEXPERIENCE." Baltimore, writes: "Will you tell me what is the Russian mode of serving a dinner, and whether it is the proper one to be used at dinner parties?" The Russian mode is not generally adopted for dinner parties, unless they are exceedingly stylish and formal occasions; then bills of fare, elaborately given, are served to each guest. The ordinary forms followed at dinners are French; where the dishes are placed upon the table and served by the host and hostess, and handed around by the waiter.

LILLIAN D. We can give you no rule for the cure of blushing. Study to acquire control over all your emotions, to think more about other people than yourself, and to do so, in every circumstance, simply and naturally. Often blushing is the result of vain self-consciousness. Try not to think that you are an object of attraction and remark.

ANDREW LONDON. There is no impropriety in a gentleman asking a lady friend for her picture, and giving his in exchange; nor is it necessary to return these because the lady marries, when she has never changed her relations toward you. It is your prerogative, as a lady, to ask your host or hostess for an introduction to any one of the guests whom you especially desire to know or dance with.

ANNIE MEARS, Fairfield, writes: "I have been quite intimate with a certain young gentleman for some time, until just lately. Now, without any explanation, and no fault on my side, he bows and smiles as pleasantly as ever, but doesn't acknowledge a word with me. How ought I to act? Would it be improper to write him a note asking his reasons for this? Or, if I deem him unworthy to recognize him, and he has continued to acknowledge your recognitions pleasantly, you had better follow out an unchanged course of conduct; as to commence to show resentment, now would convey the impression that you grieved over his withdrawn companionship. We think you would show more dignity by omitting to demand any reasons for his actions; by allowing matters to take their course all may come right eventually. Be patient and wait."

E. M. Trenton, N. J. You are quite correct in the

WAITING.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE.

Two are waiting—the one below
Patiently longs for the set of sun,
Watching life's shadows that deeper grow
The nearer the day is done.

For the one, it is light at eventide—
With the tender glow of a coming dawn—
That more and more shall shine, to guide
To the perfect day beyond.

Another waits on the further side—
Shadowed by wings of a restless peace,
Stands by the gates that are open wide,
Waiting the soul's release.

Not long to tarry—not long to wait;
A few more throbs of the pulsing heart,
And the two shall pass through the open gate
Into fullness of final rest.

A Parlor Drama.

BY LUCILLE HOLLS.

Ama sat in the great waiting-room—the chilly, gray, cheerless waiting-room, in the chilly, gray cheerlessness of the late autumn afternoon, watching for August Isham.

Crowds of people went to and fro, without. Carriages and trucks rolled noisily down the piers. Bells clanged, and newsboys shouted ceaselessly the names of the evening papers. Doors swung constantly, and the human tide passing through them changed endlessly, and only Ama sat quiet and long in her corner. She was tired of reading, so her small hands were clasped loosely over the book on her lap, and she gazed steadily, but listlessly, out at the moving throng, with a calm, indifferent, weary face.

The gray afternoon darkened rapidly. Perhaps it was that; perhaps it was the damp air, or weariness, or excitement, that made Ama shiver; or it might have been her thoughts. For she was thinking deeply, despite her quietness—so deeply that a red flame had grown in either cheek, and her eyes were shining starrily.

"Will August never come?" she thought.

"To-night, to-night, he shall tell me he loves me. For he does, I am sure he does, and I am famished, yes, madly hungry, to hear him say so. And he shall be shall—Ah—"

A long, relieved breath. The jets of gas, touched into sudden flame, revealed August Isham striding toward the door. His hand had almost touched its knob, when a coupe came through the great iron gate; the driver stopped to pay ferriage; a lady's face looked out under the brightness of a cluster of lamps, and her eyes met his. Instantly he was at her side, the carriage door opened and shut, the conveyance rolled down to the outward-bound boat, and was borne away.

With the quick, glad breath, at sight of Mr. Isham, Ama had arisen; she stood motionless through the moments occupied by the little episode, then exclaimed, with strange calmness, and a little mocking laugh:

"What a fool I have been! what a fool I have been!" and repeated the words again, quietly, as she opened the door and let herself out into the damp night; the frozen evenness of voice and manner the only betrayal of the terrible blow that had been dealt her.

"You are late, Ama, and I could not wait longer, so had my tea without you. Before you go to yours, I have something to say."

"Well, mamma," Ama answered, indifferently, from where she leaned against the mantel, looking down into the red coals within the grate.

"Why have you never told me of Mr. Enderslee's infatuation for you?"

"I did not think such a trifling matter worth troubling you about."

"Such a trifling matter worth troubling you about," repeated Mrs. Stedman, sarcastically. "Don't be quite a fool, Ama! Is it a trifling matter that a man most desirable in every way, and exceedingly rich, wishes to make you his wife?"

"Yes, when I care nothing for him."

"But you must care something for him!" asserted Mrs. Stedman, imperiously. "Think when you are likely ever again to be sought as a wife by a man of wealth and high social position; you, a poor copyist!" Ama shivered slightly. Mrs. Stedman went on: "I suppose I am of no account in your consideration of your likes and dislikes; I, your mother! I suppose it does not matter that I am an invalid, and need comforts, and—"

"Mamma! Ama interrupted, imploringly; "mamma, do not talk so!"

"And have a meagre income that is diminishing so rapidly that your little earnings cannot long square the difference," Mrs. Stedman continued, regardless of Ama's heaving breast and hurt tones. "I suppose it does not matter that I may suffer and die of starvation when our money is gone! But if my daughter does not consult my interests, I am not quite as indifferent to hers; and I have told Mr. Enderslee to call to-night and receive his answer from yourself—an affirmative one, like mine to-day! Do you hear?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well, then, go to your tea, and dress your prettiest, and do not let me see your face again until you come for my congratulations at your engagement."

Ama went slowly down to the dreary boarding-house dining-room. She did not want any supper, but she did want to think; and she felt that she could do so more clearly there, than in the little room where she must dress, adjoining her mother's. Two boards still lingered at the table. Ama did not know them, for it was a very second-class boarding-house, and Mrs. Stedman and her daughter had no association with the people in it, nearly always taking their meals before or after most of the others.

"You look tired-like, Miss," the waitress said, kindly, as Ama entered the room. "Sit down by the fire a bit, and I'll bring in some hot tea and fresh toast for you presently."

"Thank you," Ama answered, and sunk upon an ottoman beside the fire.

"So young Isham is married," were the words that suddenly disturbed her reverie. She looked up; the speaker was just pushing his napkin into its ring, preparatory to leaving the table.

"Yes, and a grand match it was; the bride was a great heiress, and you know he is his father's only son; and—"

"The dining-room door clipped into the sentence.

"After all, why should it mean August?" Ama said to herself, as she took a place at the table, and picked up an evening paper left there.

"The elite of the city will be gathered at Mrs. Ardon's ball to-night, and the appearance of Mr. August Isham, with his lovely bride, will complete the enjoyableness of the affair."

"I suppose I may be convinced of my utter folly at last!" Ama flung the paper aside, drank a cup of tea, and an hour later welcomed Mr. Enderslee with brilliant eyes, and flame-touched cheeks, in an exquisitely be-

coming toilet of black, with silver arrows catching the gaslight at throat, and ears, and among the ruddy coils of her shining hair.

"Ama, my little queen," he said, in his grave, decisive way, when she had promised to be his wife, "the wedding must be next month, remember." Then he slipped a great diamond upon her finger. A few weeks later a flat band of gold took its place beside the diamond, and Ama Stedman, the pretty copyist, was the wife of the distinguished lawyer.

"So you are to play the heroine, my dear, in the drama to-night," Mr. Enderslee said to his reserved, lady-like bride, as they met in the library of the grand old Enderslee mansion, near Philadelphia, where they had come to spend the holidays and meet all the stately Enderslee people.

"Yes, I have been honored with that part," Ama said, indifferently.

"I am glad, my dear; glad, also, that my people are so pleased with you. Shall I see you in the parlors after dinner?"

"Not until the theatricals are over, and dancing is commenced."

"Then accept now my wishes for your success, my love," he said, gallantly, and raised her white hand to his lips as they went in to dinner.

The great parlors were thronged; the stage arrangements admirable; the time for the opening scene past; why did not the curtain go up?

Behind it Ama's sister-in-law, Mrs. Garrison, was telling her:

"My dear, our hero has failed us at the last moment, and sent his cousin as a substitute. He is dressing now; will you go on just the same? He will be ready when his lines come."

The drama was a decided success. People said they had never seen such consummate acting as Mrs. Enderslee's—she was perfect! Ah! they little guessed how perfect! How horrible a surprise and torture she had endured with such marvelous art! She was called before the curtain with the substitute who had excellently filled the part of hero—August Isham! They bowed their acknowledgments of the applause, and in crossing the hall to the dressing-rooms, spoke their first real words to each other.

"Ama, how came you here?"

"Naturally enough, being the Honorable Amos Enderslee's wife."

He seized her wrist in a fierce grip. "Is this true?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Certainly. Why not?" he repeated after her. "Certainly. Why not? What a fool I have been!"

Ama started. "I do not understand you, Mr. Isham."

"And would you? Would you? Yes, you shall!" He caught up a shawl, muffled her in it, and led her unresistingly out upon the deserted veranda. She was so tired with the evening's great struggle she seemed scarcely capable of thinking, now, how to act longer.

"Listen!" he commanded, out under the moonlight. "I have been a fool, in that I gave the entire passion of a man's heart to a girl I had met by accident once, by design thrice. A fool, that I thought my rash but intense love was reciprocated. A fool, that, not even knowing her home or antecedents, I have sought her anxiously many weeks to offer her that love. A fool that—"

"Hush! August, how dare you so forget your wife and me?"

"My wife! If I had one could I be telling you this? Oh, my God, Ama, what delusion have you been under?" He understood, vaguely, the truth.

"You cannot have forgotten how ruthlessly you broke your last appointment with me; that same night I read that Mr. August Isham and his bride were to appear at a certain grand private ball."

"My cousin! I am August E. Isham, and his father, my uncle, died that very night; was dying when I should have met you. My sister had driven to my office to take me there, missed seeing me, and by a strange coincidence met me at the ferry. And—Ama, you did love me!" He had thought only of his own misery. He saw hers, now, in the corpse-like face that was opposite him. He put out his arms to clasp her, his one, one love. She put him back.

"God help us, August! The past is irrevocable, and I am a wife!"

She bowed mutely, and went within. A half hour later, as the dance music pealed out and gay couples whirled blissfully, there was a little excitement about the entrance to the parlors. Mrs. Amos Enderslee had fainted. Her ruddy hair brushed August Isham's hand as her husband bore her tenderly across the hall. He heard people say she had over-exerted herself, and waited until she came to; that she was recovering, but would not appear again that evening. Then he pressed his lips to the hand her hair had touched—the nearest his lips might ever come to her, and went forth to live the full measure of his desolate life, even as Ama was awakening to take back the bitter burden of hers, and listening to her proud husband's fond congratulations that she had played so well her part in the parlor drama.

Erminie:

THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-
FUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XX.

FIRELY GOES TO SCHOOL.

"Puck found it harder to commence
With a certain share of impudence;
Which passes one off as learned and clever,
Beyond all other degrees whatever."
—SONG OF OLD PUCK.

JUDGE LAWLESS was in a rage! If you have ever seen an angry lion, an enraged bear, or a young lady with "her mantle pinned away," you may conceive in some measure the state of mind in which that gentleman trod up and down his library floor, while he listened to Ranty's account of Pet's exploit of the previous night.

Judge Lawless was a man of forty or so, and had been a widower for five years. His face was not particularly prepossessing, though extremely handsome; his haughty, supercilious expression; his cold and somewhat sinister eyes, and slightly sensual mouth, were, on the whole, rather repelling. He prided himself, as a general thing, on his gentlemanly urbanity; but on the present occasion he quite forgot all his customary politeness, and paced up and down in a towering passion.

His son and heir, Master Ranty, had ensconced himself in a velvet-cushioned easy-chair; and with his feet on a stool, and both

hands stuck in his coat-pockets, took things very coolly indeed.

"To think that my daughter should act in such an outrageous manner!" exclaimed the judge, passionately; "making herself a town's talk, with her mad actions. What other young lady in her station of life would associate familiarly with those people at Dismal Hollow, who are a low set, as far as I understand; or ride through those infested woods after night? I shall put an immediate stop to it, if I have to lock her up in the attic on bread and water. I have a good mind to keep her on bread and water for a month or so, and see if that will not cool the fever in her blood. And you, sir," he added, stopping in his excited walk, and turning furiously upon Ranty, "deserve a sound thrashing for playing such a trick upon your sister. It would have served that young puppy Germaine right if she had put an end to his worthless life. I never liked that boy, and I command you instantly to cease your intimacy with him. If your uncle chooses to make a fool of himself, adopting every beggar's brat for a *protege*, that's no reason why I should follow his lead. Now, sir, let me hear no more of this. As the son of Judge Lawless, you should look for better companionship than the grandson of an old gossip."

"I don't know where I'd find one, then," said Ranty, sturdily. "There isn't a boy from Maine to Louisiana a better fellow than Ray Germaine. He can beat me at everything he lays his hands to, from mathematics down to pulling a stroke-oar; and there wasn't another boy at school he couldn't knock into a cocked hat."

And with this spirited declaration, Master Ranty thrust his hands deeper into his pockets, and planted his feet more firmly than ever on the stool.

"How often must I tell you, sir," vociferated his father, in a voice of thunder, "to drop this vulgar habit you have got of talking slang? I presume your accomplished friend, Germaine, has taught you that, as well as your manifold other acquisitions," he added, with a sneer.

"No, he didn't," said Ranty, stoutly; "and he could knock them into a cocked hat, if he got further, too! Ray Germaine's a tip-top fellow, and I shouldn't wonder if he'd be a President some day. It will be the country's loss if he ain't—that's all."

"Silence, sir!" thundered the judge. "How dare you have the brazen effrontery to speak in this manner to me? You have improved under your sister's tuition rapidly, since you came home! Go immediately to old Barrons Cottage, and bring Petronilla here. I shall see that she does not go there again in a hurry."

Ranty rose, with anything but a sweet expression, and went out, shaking his fist grimly at the door, I am sorry to say, once it was safely shut between them.

On reaching the cottage, he found Ray flushed and feverish, with Pet and Erminie sitting on either side of him.

"Pet, go home; father says so," was his first brusque salute.

"I won't then—not a step!" said the obstinate Pet.

"He'll be after you with a horse-whip mighty sudden, if you don't," said Ranty. "I wish you could see how he's been blazing away all the morning. I reckon he's stamping up and down the library yet, nursing his wrath to keep it warm till he gets hold of you."

"Well," said the disrespectful vixen, "if he's a mind to get mad for nothing, I can't help it. I shan't go."

"Oh, Pet! you'd better," said Erminie, anxiously. "He'll be so very angry. I can take care of Ray, you know; and your father will scold you dreadfully."

"La! I know that! I'm in for a scolding, anyway, so I may as well earn it. Might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, you know."

"Oh, Pet! don't stand bothering here all day," broke in Ranty, impatiently. "I've got to bring you home, anyway, and I suppose you think a fellow has nothing to do but stay here and wait till you're ready. Father will half-murder you, if you don't come right straight along."

"Yes; go, Pet—please do," pleaded Erminie. "I had rather you would."

"Oh, well, if I'm to be turned out I suppose I must," said Pet, taking her hat. "I'm ready, Ranty. Good-by, Minnie; I'll be back after dinner."

"I don't know about that," muttered Ranty, springing into the saddle. "People ain't got out of attics so easily as you think."

A rapid gallop of half an hour brought them to Heath Hill, a gently-sloping eminence, on which stood an imposing mansion of gray sandstone, the aristocratic home of Judge Lawless, the one great potentate of Judestown and environs.

The judge, from the window of the library, saw his son and daughter approach, and flung himself into the lounging chair Ranty had vacated, he rung the bell, and ordered the servant who answered his summons to send Miss Petronilla up-stairs directly.

"Now, you'll catch it, Pet," said Ranty, with a malicious chuckle.

"Will it? Wait till you see," retorted Pet, as, gathering up her riding-habit in her hand, she prepared to follow the servant up-stairs.

With his face contracted into an awful frown, destined to strike terror into the flinty heart of his self-willed little heiress, the judge sat, awaiting her coming. In she came, her hat cocked jauntily on one side of her saucy little head; her round, polished, boyish forehead laughing out from between clusters of short, crispy, jetty curls; her black eyes all ablaze with anticipated defiance; her rosy mouth puckered up, ready to vindicate what she considered her legitimate rights. Not the least daunted was Pet by her father's look, as swinging her riding-whip in one hand, she stood erect and fearless before him.

"Well, Miss Petronilla Lawless," began the judge, in a measured, sarcastic tone; "no doubt you are very proud of last night's achievement. You think you have done something exceedingly clever now—don't you?"

"Yes, I do," said Pet; "and so would you and everybody else—if I had only shot a real nigger, instead of Ray Germaine. It wasn't my fault. I'd just as lief shoot one as 'tother."

"No doubt. The race of Joan D'Arc is not quite extinct, I see. How will you like to have your name banded from lip to lip till it becomes a common by-word in every low tavern and hovel in Judestown?"

"Well, I shouldn't mind. I like to be talked about; and it isn't the first time I have given them something to talk about, either."

"No; but it shall be the last," said the judge, rising sternly. "I command you, now, to go no more to that cottage. If you dare to disobey me, it will be at your peril."

"Why, where's the harm of going, I want to know?" demanded Pet, indignantly.

"I am not in the habit of giving reasons for my conduct, Miss Lawless," said the judge, severely; "but in this instance I will say, it is exceedingly unbecoming in a young lady to nurse a youth who is a stranger to her. No other young lady would think for a moment of such a thing."

"Well, I ain't a young lady," said Pet, "no more than Ray is a stranger. And if I was a young lady, and went and shot a young man, I ought to help to nurse him well again, I should think."

"What you think, Miss Lawless, is of very little consequence, allow me to tell you. Your duty is to do as I say, without presuming to ask questions. I have hitherto excused your wild, rude conduct, and made every allowance for your want of proper female training; but really, your conduct is getting so outrageous there is no telling where it will end. My intention is, therefore, to put a stop to it at once."

Pet's eyes flashed open defiance, and her face assumed a look of resolute determination; but she prudently said nothing.

"I have resolved, therefore, Miss Lawless," said the judge, re-seating himself, with a look of haughty inflexibility quite overpowering; "to send you immediately to school. I wrote some time ago to a lady who keeps a private boarding-school for young girls, and she has promised to take charge of you at any time. It is an exceedingly strict establishment, and the severe discipline there maintained will have the good effect, I hope, of taming down your glaring improprieties. As I feel that keeping you here any longer is like holding a keg of gunpowder over a blazing furnace, I feel dissatisfied with you this v.r. afternoon. You need dresses and various other things, I know, which I am not altogether qualified to procure; I will, therefore, leave a sum of money in the hands of Mrs. Moodie, sufficient to purchase you a complete outfit, and such other things as you may want. It is useless for you to remonstrate, Miss Lawless," said the judge, with a wave of his jeweled hand; "for nothing you can say will move me from my purpose. I anticipated violent opposition on your part, and I am quite prepared for it. Go, I have said, this afternoon, and go you shall. If you attempt to oppose my will, you shall receive the severe punishment you have already merited."

The judge stroked his dark, glossy mustache, and looked threateningly at Pet; but to his surprise that eccentric young lady offered not the slightest opposition. When she first heard his intention of sending her away to school, she had started violently, and her color came and went rapidly; but as he went on, her eyes dropped, and an inexpressible smile flickered around her red lips. Now she stood before him, with demurely cast down eyes—the very personification of meekness and docility; and he had only seen the insufferable light of mischief blazing under their long, drooping, black lashes, resting on the thin crimson cheeks, what a different tale he would have read!

"Very well, sir," said Pet, meekly; "I suppose I can't help it, and have got to put up with it. I don't know as I should mind going to school, either, for a change. Mayn't I call and see Erminie before I go, papa?"

"Hem-m-m! ah—let's see about it," said the judge, rather perplexed by this unusual submission, and intensely relieved, too, if the truth must be told; for in his secret heart he dreaded a "scene" with his stormy little daughter.

"You may call in, for a moment, as we go past, and say good-by; but once in school, you will form new acquaintances among your own standing in society, and drop all the low connections you have formed around here. The daughter of Judge Lawless," said that gentleman, drawing himself up "is qualified, by birth and social position, to take her place among the highest and most exclusive in the land, and must forget that she ever associated with—paupers!"

A streak of fiery red flamed across the dark face of Pet, and her black eyes flew up, blazing indignantly at this insult to her friends. But the next moment she remembered her role, and down fell the long lashes again; and Pet stood as meek and demure as a kitten on the eve of scratching.

"This is all, I believe, Miss Lawless," said the judge, resuming his customary, suave blandness, and feeling intensely proud of his own achievement in having awed into submission the hitherto dauntless Pet; "you may go now, and if you have any trifling preparations to make before starting, you will have sufficient time before dinner to accomplish them. I shall expect when we reach Mr. Moodie's, you will try to behave yourself like a young lady, as my daughter will be expected to behave. You must drop your rude, brusque ways, your slang talk, amazonian bearing, and become quiet, and gentle, and ladylike, and accomplished. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," murmured Pet, putting her forefinger in her mouth.

"Very well, I hope you do. Go now."

With her long lashes still drooping over her wickedly-scoffling eyes, her finger still stuck in her mouth, Pet meekly walked out of the august "presence," and closed the library-door; but no sooner was she safely outside, than a change most wonderful to behold came over the spirit of her dream. Up flew the long eyelashes, revealing the dancing eyes, all ablaze with the anticipation of fun and frolic; erect towered the little form, as she turned; and facing the door, applied her thumb to her nose, flourished her four fingers in a gesture more expressive than elegant, and exclaimed:

"Oh! won't I be good, though! won't I be so quiet, and gentle, and good, that they'll make a saint out of me pretty soon! won't I be a pocket-edition of 'St. Rose of Lima'! Maybe I won't; that's all!"

Pet was as busy as a nailer until dinner was announced, packing up such things as she wished to take with her to school.

Great was the amazement of Ranty, when at the dinner-table his father, in pompous tones, announced his immediate departure with Pet. Ranty glanced at her, as she sat quietly looking in her plate, and being somewhat wider awake in respect to her than his father, inwardly muttered:

"Pet's up to something; I can tell that whenever she looks particularly quiet and saintly, like she does now; there's always 'breakers ahead,' as uncle would say. Mrs. Moodie will find her hands full when she gets our Pet. She'll discover she's caught a tartar, I'll be bound!"

Immediately after dinner, black Debby was ordered to dress Miss Pet for her journey, while the judge went to his own apartment to make himself as irresistible as possible. In half an hour both were ready. Pet was handed into the carriage by her father, and waved a smiling adieu to Ranty. The judge took his seat beside her, and the two superb carriages, horses, flashing with silver-mounted harness, started off at a rapid pace.

As they came within sight of the cottage, Pet, who had been lying back silently among the cushions, started up, exclaiming:

"Stop at the cottage, John; I'm going in there for a moment."

The coachman drew up, and Pet sprang out.

"I will give you just five minutes to make your adieux," said the judge, drawing out his watch; "if you are not back in that time, I shall go after you."

Pet's eyes again defiantly flashed, but without deigning to reply, she ran into the cottage.

Erminie met her at the door, and looked her surprise at seeing the stately equipage of Judge Lawless stop at the cottage, and Miss Lawless herself all arrayed for a journey.

"How is Ray?" was Pet's first question.

"Just as he was this morning. Where are you going, Pet?"

"He is no worse."

"No. Are you going away?"

"Yes, he has just gone. Where are you going, Pet?"

"Oh—to school!"

"To school! going away!" echoed Erminie in dismay.

"Yes; going to a dismal old boarding-school, where I am to walk, talk, eat, pray, and sneeze by rule. Ain't it nice?"

"Oh, Pet, I am so sorry!"

"Well, I'm not! I expect to have a real nice time. Everybody mightn't see the fun of it; but I do! I intend to finish my education, and be back in a week!"

"Oh, Pet! I don't know what I shall do when you are gone; I will be so lonesome," said Erminie, her sweet blue eyes filling with tears.

"Why didn't I tell you I'd be back in a week? I will, too. There's an old dragon there, Mrs. Moodie—I've heard of her before—and she's to hammer learning into me. Oh, I'll do her!"

"Won't you write me a letter, Pet?" said Erminie, who was sobbing, now, and clinging to her friend's neck.

"To be sure I will, and I'll bring it myself, to save postage. Don't you be afraid, Minnie. I can take care of Pet Lawless, and won't let her be put down by no one. Good-by, now; I've only got five minutes, and I guess they're up by this time. Now don't cry and take on, Minnie; you'll see I'll learn so fast that I'll be sent home finished in a week!"

And with these mysterious words, Pet gave Erminie a parting kiss, and ran from the cottage just as the judge put his head out from the carriage to call her.

The journey now proceeded uninterrupted. They remained that night at a hotel, and continued their journey next morning.

A little after noon, they reached the four-story building where Mrs. Moodie kept her costly and exclusive boarding establishment for the young female aristocracy of the land, and "trained up" (as her circulars had it) the rising female generation in all the branches of an English, French, musical, and religious education.

Judge Lawless and his daughter were shown into a magnificently-furnished drawing-room, where a "cullud pussen" took the gentleman's card and went in search of the proprietress (if the word is admissible) of the establishment.

Fifteen minutes later, the rustle of silk resounded in the hall. Pet drew herself up straight as a ramrod, compressed her lips, cast down her eyes, folded her hands, and looked the very picture of a timid, bashful, shy little country girl. Then the door opened, and magnificent in a four-flounced plaid silk, with a miraculous combination of lace and ribbons floating from her head, a tall, yellow, sharp-looking lady of middle-age floated in, and with a profound courtesy to the judge that made her four flounces balloon out around her, after the fashion of children when making "cheeses," dropped into a sofa, half-buried in a maze of floating-drapery.

"This is Miss Lawless, I presume?" said Mrs. Moodie, with a bland smile and a wave of her hand toward Pet.

"Yes, madam, this is my daughter; and I consider it my duty to tell you beforehand that I am afraid she will occasion you a great deal of trouble."

"Oh! I hope not! You are a good little girl—are you not, my dear?"—with a sweet smile to Pet. "In what way, may I ask, my dear sir?"

"In many ways, madam. She is, in the first place, unbearably wild, and rude, and self-willed, and—I regret to say—disobedient."

"Is it possible? I really would never have imagined it!" cried the lady, glancing in surprise and incredulity toward the shy, quiet-looking little girl, sitting demurely in her chair, and not venturing to lift her eyes. "I think I have tamed far more desperate characters than this; in fact, I may say I know I have. Oh! I will have no trouble with your little girl! Why, she is one of the quietest-looking little creatures I think I ever saw."

The judge glanced toward Pet, and was half inclined to fly into a rage at discovering her so unlike herself, giving the direct lie, as it were, to his assertions.

"Come over here, my love," said the lady, holding out her hand with a bland smile to Pet. "I want to see you."

Pet, after the manner of little girls when they are frightened or embarrassed, instead of complying, rubbed her knuckles into her eyes, and pretended to cry.

"Get up, and do as you are told! How dare you act so?" said the judge, forgetting his "company manners" in his rage at what he could easily see was clever acting on Pet's part.

"Now, pray, my dear sir, don't frighten the poor little thing," cried the dulcet tones of the lady. "Little girls are always nervous and frightened when first sent to school. Come here, my love; don't be afraid of me!"

"Go!" thundered the judge, with a brow like a thundercloud.

Pet, still sniffing, got up and went over to Mrs. Moodie.

"What is your name, my dear?" smiled the lady, taking Pet's little brown hand in her own snowy fingers.

"Pet-Pet-ronilla," sobbed the elf.

"Now, you must not cry, dear; we will take the best of care of you here. Of course, you will miss your papa for a few days; but after that we will get along very nicely. Were you ever at school before?"

"Ye-es, ma'am."

"What did you learn, love?"

"What was their names?"
 "Jack and the Bean-stalk; 'The Goose with the Golden Egg'; 'Little Red—'"
 "Oh! my dear, I don't mean those! Have you read nothing else?"
 "No, ma'am; only a spelling-book."
 "Can you write?"
 "Yes, ma'am, when somebody holds my hand."

"Have you studied grammar and geography? I suppose not, though."
 "She has, madam; at least she commenced," said the judge.

"Ah, indeed! What is English Grammar, love?"
 "A little book with a gray cover," said Pet.
 "No, no! What does English Grammar teach?"

"I don't know—it never taught me anything; it was Mr. Hammer."
 "Oh, dear me! You are rather obtuse, I fear. Perhaps you know more of geography, though. Can you tell me how the earth is divided?"
 "It ain't divided!" said Pet, stoutly. "It's all one piece!"

"Ah! I fear your teacher was none of the best," said the lady, shaking her head. "We shall have to remedy all these defects in your education, however, as well as we can. I hope to send you a very different little girl home, judge."

"I sincerely hope so," said the judge, rising. "Farewell, madam. Good-bye, Petronilla; be a good girl—remember."

"Oh, I'll remember!" said Pet, significantly, accepting her father's farewell salute, with a great deal of *sang froids*.

Mrs. Moodie politely bowed her stately guest out, and then turning to Petronilla, said:

"The young ladies are all in the class-room studying, my dear. Would you prefer going there, or shall I have you shown to your room?"

"I'll go where the girls—I mean the young ladies are," said Pet, following the rustling lady up stairs.

"Very well, this way, then," said madam, turning into a long hall with large white folding-doors at the end, through which came drowsily the subdued hum of recitation.

"Well; I think I have done the bashful up beautifully!" mentally exclaimed Petronilla. "I reckon I've amazed papa. Maybe I won't surprise them some, if not more, before this night's over. Oh! won't I dose them, though!"

And, chuckling inwardly, our wicked elf followed the stately Mrs. Moodie, who marched on ahead, in blissful ignorance of the diabolical plot brewing in Pet's mischief-loving head.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

The Girl Pilot;

OR,

THE SMUGGLERS OF THE ISLE.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

WALKING quietly down Broadway, one pleasant afternoon, I was suddenly confronted by an old friend, whom years before I had known as a gallant officer on board a United States revenue cutter in the Southern waters.

"Well, old fellow, what are you doing in New York?" I queried.

"Ah! I must tell you: I am married, and—"

"Married! Donald Eustace, do you speak the truth?"

"Ay, ay, sir; I am a Benedict, and my 'better half' is just better than any other man's better half that lives."

"Doubtless you think so; most newly-married men do; but, Donald, I believed you were a confirmed old bachelor, for never did I know of you to call upon a lady."

"Nor did I; but I will tell you all about it if you will dine with my wife and myself at the St. Nicholas to-day—six o'clock, sharp," and Donald Eustace had given a strong emphasis to the word *wife* which proved he was proud of his new acquisition.

My friend was a Kentuckian, a whole-souled, handsome fellow, noted as a most skillful and daring officer, and possessing means enough to live comfortably without his pay.

Together we had passed many pleasant days, for I had joined Donald in several cruises on board a trim little cutter, when he was first officer, along the Southern coasts, to protect the revenue of Uncle Sam from the smugglers that infested these waters.

At half past five I sent up my card at the hotel, and was soon ushered into a handsomely furnished sitting-room, where I was greeted by Donald, who presented me to his wife, a woman of whom any man might well be proud, for she was a regal beauty, of the Spanish style, and a form above the medium height, perfect in its mould.

Mrs. Eustace welcomed me most kindly, and as she had just come in from a drive, asked to be excused while she dressed for dinner.

"Donald, where did you get that wife?" I asked, with evident envy in my tones.

"I knew you would be envious, old fellow; but, to answer your question, I will tell you how I got that wife, for there is a romance about it."

"You see, the captain was off on a week's leave, and the cutter was lying in the harbor of P. . . when word came to me that a smuggling vessel was expected off the coast, at a point where I knew there was supposed to be a rendezvous of the free-traders, but which all of our efforts had been in vain to discover."

"Well, I at once put to sea, and was now creeping along the coast under easy sail, and came to the suspected trading waters just at midnight."

"We cruised about until morning, and when day broke I sent the boats among the islands, but we could discover no smugglers, though several broken boxes found upon an island convinced me that the proper rendezvous had been hit upon."

"Confident that the vessel expected had not arrived, I ran the cutter into a small harbor, as I believed, behind the islands and reefs, and housed my topmasts, so that we could not be seen from seaward, and then I waited two days, each morning and afternoon going in the boats upon exploring expeditions among the reefs and isles that everywhere surrounded us."

The night of the third day of my stay on the coast it came on to blow great guns from the eastward, and I found our harbor not as good as I supposed, for the sea rising, it swept over the reefs in torrents of water, and the cutter began to labor and strain, until I ordered another anchor let go and paid out more cable.

"But I found I had sought a haven of safety in what appeared, in a storm, a seething cauldron, for the wash of the sea would rush landward over the reefs, and rebounding, would cut up a very mischief, which caused the cutter to one moment drag at her anchors and the next drag clear over them with the force of the backward current."

"In the meantime the wind was howling like mad around us; the roar of the ocean was terrible, and we could not see the length of the cutter upon any side."

"She is dragging like a race-horse, sir," yelled the sailing master from forward, and then came from the quartermaster, who stood at the wheel:

"Breakers astern!"
 "It was a terrible moment, and I was about to give up all for lost, when a hail in a hoarse voice off the starboard quarter startled me with:

"Ahoy, the cutter!"
 "Ahoy!" I yelled back through my trumpet, and the answer was:

"Lower us a rope over the stern! Live! or you'll be too late to save the cutter."

"The order was quickly obeyed, while the crew raised a shout of joy to know that help was at hand."

"The next instant two forms ascended over the stern of the cutter, and the battle-lantern displayed a huge negro, bare-headed, and wearing a blue woolen shirt and white duck pants, and what I at first believed to be a youth of sixteen, for an oil-cloth suit covered the figure from head to foot; but the next instant one of the sweetest voices I had ever heard said in my ear:

"I have come to save the cutter, sir; but it is a desperate chance, for you have drifted nearly upon the Porcupine reefs."

"What! you, a girl, a pilot in these waters, I cried, in amazement, recognizing her sex."

"I know every reef and sunken rock; but there is no time to talk, so have your anchors up as soon as the next back-flow of the current comes, and I will go forward, while my man takes the wheel. When the anchors are apeak, set the foremast stay-sail, and the mizzen-sail reefed down, and station yourself amidships to repeat my orders to the man at the wheel."

"My friend, talk of woman's cowardice to me no more, for that night cured me of being cynical, or skeptical regarding the sex, and I positively caved before that girl pilot, and obeyed her orders as though I had been a cabin boy."

"Well, the current soon sent us again over our anchors, and rapidly the crew made the windless fly, and as we were again being borne back, they had left the bottom, and under the designated canvas, the cutter yielded to the power of the wind, edging off slowly from a frightful reef that nearly shaved us at one moment."

It was so dark that I could not discover anything three lengths of the craft away, and I feared for the cutter and ourselves, as I stood amidships, trumpet in hand, to repeat the orders from the girl pilot, who had stationed herself upon the forward ratlines to windward, so that she could see the ship from stem to stern, while the giant negro held the wheel in a grip of iron.

"Starboard! Starboard your helm," came in the clear voice of the girl pilot, rising above the roar of the waves, and shrieking of the wind.

"I repeated the order through my trumpet, and thus for half an hour it went on, the ringing cries coming from forward, my brazen repetition, and the answer in the hoarse tones of the negro, followed instantly by the yielding of the cutter to her helm."

"Through that fearful gauntlet of island, reef, and sunken rock, the crew were silent, all eyes bent upon the dark object in the ratlines, from which came the clear orders, and waiting for the next command, expecting their services would be required."

"But no; a half hour of dread, of fearful danger, and the noble little cutter dashed into smooth water, where no longer the waves dashed over her, or the wind shrieked through her rigging, for around her towered cliffs high enough to protect her from the fury of the gale."

"Instantly that the anchors were down, the girl pilot came aft, and said, in tones strangely quiet:

"Captain, I have saved your vessel, your life, and the lives of your crew, and I have a reward to ask in return."

"Name it, lady, and it shall be granted," I replied.

"It is this: You are at present hunting for smugglers on this coast, and believe that a rendezvous exists among these islands."

"I am assured of it, lady."

"Well, if I give you a guarantee that you will be protected, will you visit that island, off your bow quarter in the morning, and negotiate with the smuggler chief for the transfer of all goods now on the island to yourself, with the schooner and sloop belonging to the free-traders, and a promise that they will entirely leave the coast, if you will let the man go free?"

"What guarantee can you give, lady, that it will be as you say?" I asked.

"My word! my, more, I will remain on board the cutter until you return."

"I will not ask it, but take your word; but, why, can I ask, do the smugglers wish these terms?"

"It is the desire of their chief. Now, I will go ashore, and at nine o'clock in the morning, will come for you."

"So saying, she got into the surf-skiff, which she had come out to the cutter in, and the negro following her, they were soon out of sight in the darkness, the crew giving the girl three roars of cheers, as she departed, but I, standing like one bereft of all reason, must admit, I knew not what to make of the strange adventure of the night."

Promptly, at the time specified, the skiff came alongside, the girl pilot no longer wearing her oil-skin suit, for the storm had cleared away, but a dress of blue flannel, and a fancy little hat.

"I sprang in, after giving my orders to the officer in command, and the negro sent the light boat swiftly through the waters, until we arrived at a landing upon one of the larger islands, where stood a man of majestic presence, to greet us, while not far off was a pretty little sea-side cottage."

"Lieutenant Eustace, this is my father, the smuggler chief," said the Girl Pilot, and I gazed with considerable surprise and interest upon the man and his daughter.

"Senior, I am glad to meet you," said the chief, extending his hand, while he spoke with a slight Spanish accent.

"He then continued:

"I have given your Government considerable trouble, I admit, but you must admit my daughter served you a good turn last night, for she is a noble-hearted girl, and cared not to see you perish with your brave crew."

"But to the point. I am a Spanish exile, or have been, and for twelve years have lived here, embittered with the world, and leading the contraband life."

"Of late my disabilities have been removed, and I am at liberty to return to Spain; hence I am willing to atone all in my power to the United States by surrendering all goods in my possession, with a large schooner and sloop, now anchored near here, retaining only a smaller craft to convey my men in separate parties to the mainland, and land them at different points."

"In return I ask that my men shall go free, and also my daughter and myself, and your cutter can remain there until all my men have gone, excepting yonder negro, who will still follow my fortunes, and then I will give the island over into your charge, with all that I have told you."

"Should you refuse, why, your cutter can never gain the sea again without the aid of either myself, my daughter, or the negro. But agree to my terms, and I will depart at once for Spain, taking my daughter and the negro with me, for he carries a noble heart beneath his black skin."

"You have decided upon this course because you are no longer an exile?" I asked.

"Not entirely. When I left Spain, I brought with me all I cared for in the world—this little girl."

"Carefully have I reared her, and three years of her life she passed at one of the best schools in New Orleans; but she is a perfect sailor, and knows these waters as well as I do."

"Only a week ago she discovered that her father was a smuggler chief, and hourly has she implored me to relinquish my illegal life, and I had decided to do so, when my papers came from Spain, allowing me to go back."

"My friend, I agreed to the smuggler's terms; his crew departed quietly, and then, when all had gone, two weeks after I had dropped anchor in the cove, the island rendezvous was in my possession, with all of its valuable stores of goods, and the schooner, sloop, and small boats, excepting a little craft, a sloop yacht of seven tons, the chief reserved for himself."

"During my stay there, I almost hourly saw the fair pilot, and my heart was soon within her keeping, and with joy I discovered that she returned my love."

"Honest in my affection, I asked her father for her hand, and he said:

"Lieutenant Eustace, resign from your present service, and within three months come to Spain. Here is my address, and if you are both then of the same mind, I will give you my daughter, and the blessing of a reformed man."

"During my stay at the island the beautiful Girl Pilot sailed over and over the waters with me, until she taught me the sea channel, and then, when the little yacht departed, carrying with it the ex-smuggler, the negro, beautiful Isadora, and my heart, I felt lonely indeed, and longed to go in her to the seaport up the coast for which she was destined."

"But duty bade me remain, and with my prizes, and rich stores of captured goods, I sailed for P. . . and reported what I had done, after which I resigned."

"I was both praised and condemned, particularly the latter for allowing the alien to go; but then Governments are said to be ungrateful, and Government knew not how impossible it was for me to make better terms; and besides, Government was not in love."

"Well, I was on time promptly in Spain at the end of three months, and, bless your soul, I found the ex-smuggler chief a high state officer, and a man of great wealth, for his estates had been returned to him."

"Isadora was more beautiful than ever, welcomed me warmly, and in four weeks more the Girl Pilot became Mrs. Donald Eustace—ah, my Isadora, I have just been telling our friend of our romantic meeting," and Donald welcomed his beautiful wife back into the room, dressed in a superb dinner costume."

We descended to the dining-room, and as I gazed upon the lovely, refined woman before me, I could hardly realize that she had ever safely guided a war-vessel through desperate dangers into safety, and in a full bumper of old Spanish wine I drank the health of The Girl Pilot of the Smuggler's Isle."

Pacific Pete,

The Prince of the Revolver.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "OLD BULL'S EYE," "YELLOW-STONE JACK," ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

"OLD BUSINESS" TALKS BUSINESS.

"You came just in time, old man," said Pete, as the trio walked rapidly away from the scene of bloodshed. "We was givin' 'em the best we knowed, but I reckon they'd 'a' tak us into camp if it hadn't been for you."

"Yes," chimed in Mark Austin, "you have doubled the debt I owed you. I only hope we will both live long enough for me to pay it."

"I reckon I'll give yer the chance aforelong—an' that's jest the point I was wantin' to talk over with you fellers. I want your help, ef I kin git it; but mind, I don't want it fer nothin'. Ef you'll help me, I'll help you. Old Business is my name, an' business is my natur'."

I talk right up to the bull's-eye. 'F you'll jine, good enough. Ef not, there's no harm did, and I kin look up other partners."

"I don't know what you're driving at, but here's my hand—I'll stick to you through thick and thin, and set to work whenever you give me the cue," exclaimed Mark, impulsively.

"Wherever the boy goes or whatever he does, he an' I air partners—that's settled," said Pete, and the trio walked on in silence.

"Only, I reckon we'd better take a look at the lay-out afore makin' any big promises. Not that I doubt you, old man, but there's somethin' queer about you—pears like you ain't just what you seem. I've a faint idee 'at we've met somewhar afore."

"Keep a-thinkin', and mebbe you'll remember it all, in good time," was the quiet reply. "But I don't ax you to go it blind. I'll deal on the open with ye—but I reckon we'd better wait ontel we git to the shanty. It's mean talkin' in sech rough walkin'."

"We'll have plenty of time. To-morrow—or to-day, rather, is Sunday, and we can make up lost sleep, if needed. I, for one, don't feel like sleeping for a week!"

"'F you did, you'd dream o' black-eyed angels in red dresses, shore!" chuckled Pike.

With only an occasional remark the trio trudged on through the dim starlight, following the winding, rough trail that led to "Dick's Pocket." And behind them, skulking along with the noiseless celerity of Indian scouts, taking advantage of every point of cover, came the five men, waiting only a favorable opportunity for dealing a treacherous, deadly blow.

The camp was soon reached. Situated in a hollow, surrounded by evergreen trees, with high rocks to break the force of the north and west winds, the shanty was a really comfortable place, though so frail and rude in appearance. Built against the face of a rock, of slender poles, covered with brush, it seemed a better shelter for beast than man, yet our friends found it very comfortable.

"Take a squat down, while I start up the fire. Then we'll hev a mouthful to eat afore we go into the de tails," quoth Long Pike, as he fumbled around and struck a light.

"'Twouldn't go bad, and I've got a morsel

o' real mountain dew hyar, to wash it down," chuckled Old Business.

"The old man can discount you there, friend," laughed Mark. "He keeps a jugful of the joyful under the bushes, yonder. It's his medicine, and he never grumbles at having to take a dose."

"It's good stuff when a critter kin 'ford to give himself up to the 'joyin' of it, an' nothin' else to trouble him. But it's pesky contrary stuff when a man's got juberome work on his hands. I've had this bottle nigh a week, an' it's sca'ce'ly bin touched."

Pike produced some cold bacon and corn bread, with a bottle of molasses, and, each man furnished with a dinky, battered tin plate, the trio ate heartily, winding up with a "wee drop o' the crayture," as Mikel Lynch would have phrased it. Then, their pipes filled and lighted, a momentary silence fell over them. Old Business was the first to speak, seeing that it was expected of him.

"I reckon you fellers want to know what I'm drivin' at, don't ye? Kinder cur's like, eh?"

"Take your time; that's another day a-comin'."

"Lucky fer us pore sinners which is a wadin'-knee-deep in the slow o' carnal 'raption—oh-ah! Poot, feller sinners, 'pent afore the pizen tarantaller o' total depravity, with its ten thousand legs o' red-hot iron, an' its rattlesnake teeth bigg'n' a crowbar, drags you down to whar you kin git a squar' meal o' brimstone an' sulphur at all hours, cheap fer nothin'. There's me—Old Business in a minnit! Used to be a hard-shell—a reglar snappin' turtle—afere I fell from grace an' tuck to runnin' a monte bank. Your speakin' o' another day a-comin', minded me of the way I used to sling the gospel at the critters who thunk thar wasn't anyboddy like Brother—Thar! I reckon I done fergot what I came hyar fer," and Old Business abruptly interrupted himself.

"Then you have been a preacher," smiled Austin.

"Hain't I jist! Lord love ye, boy, I've been a little o' most everythin' in my time. When I was a little shaver I driv' a canal-boat; but one night I went to the theater. That settled me. I tarmined to be one o' them actor fellers whar kiked round and chewed soap. I didn't stick to the biz long. First night I was on I had to take kear o' the cheers an' sick like. The dog-goned boys, they yelled out 'soup,' or sick like suft. Made me mad, it did so! I wasn't no hash-slinger; not much. I jist lepped the stage an' mounted 'em. Then thar was some ear-chawin'; but, somehow, my years got the most. Then I went whalin'. First whale we saw an' struck bust'ed up our boat an' sucked me down re-lans. Reckon I lived thar nigh two weeks afore I could cut my way out. Whale 'ared up and kicked me overboard. Swam on ontel I struck shore—a cannibal island. Queen she fell head over heels in love with me, so we hitched, stole a canoe, and paddled to a white-man's kinty ag'in, whar we j'ined a show as the latest patent out on baby chawers. But whar's the use in talkin'! I've bin everywhar an' everythin', if not more. Yet I ain't proud—not a mite."

"I reckon you made the best preacher—you've got the gift o' gab most powerful big," dryly observed Pike.

"I was too pop'lar; that's what made me quit. The siteren they git so powerful a'fected they'd hang on my neck an' hug an' kiss an' beller over me—kep' my clothes so pesky wet, I jist ketched my death o' cold, an' had to sour on 'em—fact! But thar—Business is my name an' business is my natur'. Then let's talk business."

"You said that afore," put in Pike.

"I reckon you fellers hev hearn tell o' a pesky critter called Vincente Barada, an' his gang?"

"The one the rumpus was about at Wild Cat?"

"The very same varmint. He's the subject o' my discourse, that is, he's what I want to talk about jest now. I fust knowed him in '49; liked 'im fust rate, too, ontel one day he rubbed out my brother Jeemes. They'd bin hev'n a quiet game o' draw, an' the last hand was a pesky queer one—each feller held four aces. Barada he jist stuck Jim under the short ribs, cabbaged the stakes an' puchached, hot foot. I tuck his trail, an' I'm on it yit. I blowed the guff on 'im at Wild Cat, but he dodged me. 'Twar a long time afore I could git track o' him ag'in, but I've good reasons fer thinkin' that he is in these parts—in-deed, I'm pretty sartin I kin put my han' right on 'im now. But I want to find out what his little game is, fust, an' spile him in that, then come down on him like a thousan' o' bricks."

"What are your reasons for believing he is in these parts?" asked Austin, with a quick glance at Pike.

"One is this. You know the day you hed the turn-up with the cinnamon? Waa! that same day I overhearn two fellers talkin'—I'll tell ye who they was, some time. One feller he told the other the cap't'n wanted him to locate in Windy Gap, ready fer business, an' handed him a note from the boss—this same," and Old Business produced the note that Eli Brand had crumpled up and thrown away.

The note had no address; it was a simple order for some one, whose name was not mentioned, to obey the bearer as though he was the writer—Vincente Barada.

"That's one o' my reasons," added Old Business. "I've got others, but that'll answer fer jest now. Lis'en an' I'll tell ye what it is I want o' you two. I know more o' ye than you think, mebbe. I know that you hev got plenty o' grit an' backbone enough to fight a thousan' at a time, ef you was pushed. I know you're honest an' ready to fight in a good cause. That's why I come to you. This is a good cause. These bands o' mountain thieves an' cutthroats is a disgrace to the kentry. Ef a feller makes a strike in a honest way, he's got to sleep with both eyes open an' a pistol in each hand to defend his airnins, or else the chancines air that he'll wake up in the mornin' to find his plunder gone up the flume an' his throat cut from year to year—like the mouth o' a Ute at grub-time. Ain't that 'bout the lay-out?"

"It's too true," earnestly replied Austin. "I believe before God that my father met his death in some such way. He wrote to us that he had made a fortune—over fifty thousand dollars—and said that he would be with us almost as soon as his letter. He did not come—we never heard from him afterword. The suspense killed mother. I did what I could for my sister—she is married now, to a good man, thank God!—and came out here to see if I could trace or learn anything concerning his fate—only to fail!"

"I hearn somethin' 'bout that, which is another o' my reasons fer pickin' you out. You'll be keener on the trail. As fer your yard, thar, I don't know so much 'bout him—though he do say as how we've met somewhar afore—"

"I know it—that's flat!" doggedly muttered Pike. "But I can't place ye—wish 't I could. Sometimes I think you're a feller 'at was onced a good frind o' mine, who did me a great service. Then ag'in it 'pears to me you're the pesky nip that cheated me out o' my eye-teeth in a hoss-trade. Which is which, anyhow?"

"Mebbe I'm all two both on 'em," chuckled Old Business. "I reckon we member it all, arter a bit, ef you've got patience."

"What is it you want us to do?" asked Austin.

"I said we'd swap help. I'll tell ye fust what my offer is. You must know I've tramped purty well over these diggin's, an' I ain't a man to keep my eyes shet while lookin' fer a trail. Tother day—don't matter jest when or whar, fer they say walls hev ears, sometimes—tother day I made a diskivery. I struck a 'pocket' o' gold, to which this yere Dick's Pocket wasn't a primin'. I looked into it a little. I picked up three chunks o' pure gold, each one big 's my fist—"

Old Business abruptly paused, and a strange light filled his eyes. A half-stifled exclamation from without came to his ears, and his keen wit realized the impending danger. But his voice never changed as he arose and said:

"I'm drier 'n a fish—wait tell I git a drink."

He picked up the iron bucket of water, took a drink, then dextrously flung its contents over the fire, extinguishing every spark.

"Lay down an' look to your weapons, boys! Thar's somebody outside!" he cried, shrilly.

CHAPTER X.

A CHANGE OF BASE.

THE half-stifled exclamation that brought the startling revelation to such an abrupt termination came from the lips of Eli Brand. Despite his usual coolness and self-control, the statement of Old Business momentarily threw him off his guard. But the cool manner in which the old hunter extinguished the fire and left the interior of the hut in complete darkness, and the sharp click of firearms being prepared for use, recalled Brand to a full sense of his impudence.

Ten minutes earlier he would have welcomed a discovery after that manner. Reckless, hardened and crime-stained as he undoubtedly was, Eli Brand found it hard to shoot down an unsuspecting man from under cover, and twice his parted lips had closed again without uttering the fatal word.

Then came the story of the wonderfully rich "pocket" or "placer," where the big nuggets of virgin gold might be had for the mere stooping to pick it up. That unlucky exclamation! Only for it, they would have learned the exact position of this marvelous deposit, and then—Well, 'twould be easy to burn powder to win such a stake.

"Quick—follow me!" hissed Eli Brand, crouching low down and gliding rapidly away from the brush shanty.

Only one of the party hesitated. That was Frank Mason, the youthful desperado. He was ignorant of Brand's sudden change of programme—he knew that they had been ordered to put this man out of the way. The h

AN O-BIT-UARY.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

You can well say "The dog is dead!"
Unbreathing he lies sleeping;
How strange it is that he should be
Such dogged silence keeping!

His soul has gone unto that bourne
Of sainted dogs ethereal;
No more he'll take from out your leg
A mouthful of material.

He was a dog in every way,
Although not much to brag on;
They took his body in a cart—
His tail went on a waggin'.

His bark was wrecked upon a rock
That oft a dog's path crosses;
And now, alas, another pause
Is added to his pawes!

His bones, I mean the ones he brought,
They cumber up my own yard;
Among the bones he loved to be,
And now he's in the bone-yard.

They played the deuce with my old Tray;
It makes my heart feel sickly;
There's silence now about my house—
That cur was tail-tucked quickly.

He was the first into a mass,
And tried to make a bout of it,
And to keep even all around it,
He was the first one out of it.

He loved to take a friendly nip,
And dodged the consequences;
A thorough-bread meat-tear-er
He was in all its senses.

He ate some pounds of arsenic
To get the meat around it,
And barked my neighbor out of sleep
Until he was astounded.

'Twas dog-days with him all the year,
And these he filled with growling;
Like every dog he had his day,
And went to his canine howling.

Oh, cur, why should thy death occur,
Though but lately I've known ye?
'Twas done on purp-ose purp-ose purp-;
I'll now eschew bologna!

Righting a Wrong.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

IRMA HOWARD'S face was flushed angrily, and as she stood by the window impatiently tapping the thick, crystal clear glass, she bit her beautiful scarlet under lip until the pearly teeth left cruel impressions.

"I declare, it is too provoking! Here it is half-past seven, and Gardiner not home to dinner yet! He knows I hate to be kept waiting;—and to-night of all nights, when there is the reception at Mrs. Lexington's to dress for. I do believe he does it on purpose."

Mrs. Howard swept the train of her elegant dinner dress across the Moquet carpet, and seated herself petulantly in her little blue velvet chair, watch in hand, and with anxiously gathering darkness on her beautiful young face, that should have been so carefree and joyous.

Really a beautiful face—the only one that had ever attracted Gardiner Howard, the rich young suitor who had fallen so desperately in love with Irma Ray, and whom Irma worshipped just as much.

It had been a *bona fide* love match, and the bride had felt, when she came to the magnificent home her husband had made for her, with its costly luxuries, its elegant conveniences, its corps of trained servants—everything that heart could wish for, Irma had thought, with thrills of ecstatic gratitude, that surely Gardiner Howard's wife was the happiest woman the sun shone on.

For a while they were both perfectly contented; then, so gradually had a cloud arisen, so imperceptible was the difference that grew between them, that neither one of them could have defined it at the first, save by a consciousness that there was something not quite right.

There were times when Irma felt slighted because Gardiner neglected to be home exactly upon time, although that gentleman was usually prompt. There were times when Mr. Howard thought Irma might spare him reproach, although she was generally amiable and gentle.

But now the time had come when there was nothing but reproaches from Irma—worse than reproaches; that ceaseless scolding, which is the very essence of unendurable misery. When he was late, when he was unexpectedly early, if he did or did not do certain things, under all circumstances, Irma developed a first-class lecture, always ready for him. To-night, her watch sparkling in her hand, as she waited for the precise moment of the time to arrive when dinner should be served, she made a picture at once pretty and pitiful; and her placid, sweet, fond mother, from among the cushions of her invalid chair, sighed, as she looked at her:

"It's just half-past seven, and I shall not wait another instant."

She rung the bell energetically; then, to the servant who answered:

"Dinner at once!" in a tone of impatient command very unusual even in these latter days.

"Do you not think you had better have waited, dear? It seems discourteous for the master of the house to come and find us eating."

Mrs. Ray spoke quietly; but there was latent disapprobation of Irma's course in her lady-like manner.

Irma curled her lip.

"I might wait every night, mamma, for that matter. Wait until you have prolonged your visit several weeks, and you will discover for yourself how little Gardiner consults my wishes or comfort."

"It seems to me, with your efficient cook and waiters, that the delay of dinner should be a very small inconvenience—certainly not warrantable for you to lose your temper before a servant. If you are so cross with Gardiner, I don't wonder he is tardy in coming home."

Mrs. Howard looked incredulously at her mother.

"Why, mamma, surely you are not taking sides against me? Surely you are not going to uphold Gardiner's shameful conduct?"

A suspicion of angry tears glistened in her eyes.

"I shall take sides with no one, Irma; but where I see a wrong that, if not righted, will ruin your home and wreck your happiness, I think it is my duty to speak to the one I see is most to blame."

She looked kindly, pityingly, at the sweet, surprised face.

"And you think I am only to blame?"

"Perhaps not 'only,' but certainly very much. If I were your husband I would not care to meet you as you look and feel now. Being your mother, I tell you what you ought to do."

Irma bit her lips as the butler superintended the serving of the bijou of a dinner. Then she dismissed the obsequious waiter.

"We'll get on alone to-night, Dwight. You may go."

Then, to her mother, with her face very pale and her lips almost quivering:

"Mamma, you don't know how you have wounded me. As for Mr. Howard, if he has not enough affection left for me to treat me with some degree of consideration, he shall at least know how I feel about it. If he chooses to make me uncomfortable I shall not spare him, most certainly."

Mrs. Ray sipped her soup thoughtfully as she listened.

"You are old enough to follow the dictates of your own conscience, Irma. I only hope you may not regret the course you pursue. That is Gardiner's step now."

Irma straightened in her chair, and a flush spread over her cheeks as Mr. Howard came in; a fine looking young man, with a careless grace, and somewhat of indifference in his manner as he sauntered to the grate, and stood looking at the well-spread table.

"Nearly through with dinner, Irma? You see, I remembered the reception to-night."

"Thank you. I am not going."

She spoke most chillingly, and he raised his eyebrows inquiringly.

"Not going! and Lettie Lexington such a friend of yours? I promised Norris to bring you, sure. What will they think?"

Irma's lips were compressed still more forbiddingly.

"Perhaps, if they think that my considerate husband gave me half an hour to dress in—a specimen of the generality of his attentions—they will accept my regrets."

Gardiner frowned.

"That's the sheerest nonsense, Irma, and you know it. Because I happen to be a little late—"

She interrupted him hotly.

"Happen! when do you happen to be in time, or to do anything you know would please me?"

"If your memory is so treacherous that you cannot recall any such efforts of mine, I think for the future I had better consult my own inclinations more."

She rose immediately from her chair.

"Your own inclinations more! Pray, what?"

He coolly glanced at his watch.

"Then I presume you and your mother will excuse me! I shall go alone!"

He slammed the door rather expressively after him, and Irma's tears began to flow.

"You see, mamma, just how it is! Am I to blame?"

Mrs. Ray had taken no part in the altercation, but her quiet, thoughtful face indicated how deeply she regretted it. Now, with a curious expression, she looked at Irma, and answered her.

"You are silly to cry. If you and your husband are perpetually squabbling, why do you live together! I will take you home if you wish it; there is not much doubt but that Gardiner would get a divorce."

Irma looked incredulously at her mother.

"Separate from him?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Ray, decidedly. "Anything is better than quarrelling. And you say he has no affection for you."

"I don't believe he has," Irma returned, angrily, as she remembered his hasty exit.

"And I will go home with you, mamma. I hope I'll never see him again!"

That night in her room, Mrs. Ray sat meditatively beside the cheery fire.

"Poor, foolish children! it will be a bitter lesson, but nothing short of it will remedy the evil now."

"Which way, Howard? To the St. Denis, or home to dinner?"

Howard and Norris Lexington met each other amid the throng at Broadway, one bright, March evening, a fortnight or so later.

"I'm not particular," Howard returned, carelessly. "St. Denis, if you go there."

Lexington locked his arm confidently in his friend's.

"I was booked there, because you know Lottie is away for a day or so, and home is a dull sort of place without her. There's nothing like these pretty, sweet little wives to welcome one with a kiss, is there?"

Howard smiled bitterly.

"You haven't been three months married, Lexington, which accounts for your enthusiasm."

"Don't you go back on Mrs. Howard in that style, Gard! By the by, she'll be expecting you, won't she?"

"I won't make any difference. I prefer the hotel."

Lexington dropped his friend's arm, and looked around in the handsome, moody face.

"Look here, Howard, what's up? You and Irma haven't quarreled?"

"Really, I forget. It has been a week since she has seen fit to speak to me."

"Howard, you do not mean it?"

"I wish to heaven I didn't."

"But—but—I can't understand. Whose fault is it? Surely not Irma's?"

Howard leaned carelessly on the table, and drummed his fingers listlessly.

"Oh, no, of course not. Women never sulk, nor scold, nor drive a man to the devil, by their fretting, fault-finding whining. Irma is an angel, and I am a—"

He smiled cynically in Lexington's grave, troubled face.

"I know you'll pardon me, old fellow, but remember it always takes two to make a quarrel. If you are not happy—"

Howard listened, moodily, then interrupted, impatiently.

"Happy! I never expect to be happy again. The truth is, Norris, I can't please her. Nothing suits; even my presence is the source of a perpetual frown. Would you believe I haven't seen her smile for weeks?"

He asked it coldly.

"Have you tried to make her smile?"

Howard shrugged his shoulders.

"I stopped trying long ago. It's no use. She has lost every atom of regard for me."

"Nonsense! Now see here, Howard, and see if I can't give you a bit of advice—if I am a Benedict of but three months. You're all wrong—both of you—all wrong. Irma has acquired a habit of fretting and being unpleasant; you have given over all attempts to win her to sweetness and happiness again. You must begin over—go back to your courting days! Don't tell me she doesn't love you—and I know you love her!"

Howard flushed consciously.

"If she was what she used to be—"

"Exactly—make her what she used to be. And I'll bet a dozen of Golden Seal she thinks the very same of you. Isn't it worth trying for?"

A pale, anxious expression was on Howard's handsome face.

"If I thought—"

"Don't waste time thinking! Go home to dinner—take her a bouquet—meet her—you know how, and my word for it, you'll be the happiest man on 'Change to-morrow."

Half an hour later, with a tiny basket of purple and white violets, in the center of which was his wife's name in dainty pink

rosebuds, Mr. Howard knocked at the door of Irma's dressing-room—to be met by the maid with a folded and sealed letter in her hand.

"Missus has been gone out an hour or so, and said I was to give you this," she explained, and then left the room.

A dim, vague horror oppressed him as he took the letter and broke it open.

His hand trembled, and a sickening sense of loss and desolation came over him as he read:

"Good-by. I have at length decided to leave the house that is a home to me no longer, where, for weeks, I have been learning that the greatest mistake of my life was in becoming the wife of a man who never loved me. I am going home with my mother."

Gone! Gone from the house that was "a home no longer!"

And he, he had helped make it so to her—he, the man who loved her so truly, so ardently, before these evil days had come upon them.

How empty and desolate the house felt! Not to have her there—whom he had come to make his peace with, come to woo again as in other, better times!

The dainty flower-basket seemed to mock him, and the rosy name to prick deep into his conscience as he stood there, disappointed, bewildered, heart-stricken.

Then, with a sob wrung from such anguish as seldom passes a man's lips, he bowed his head on his hands.

"My God, forgive me and give her back—my darling! my darling!"

Then—a swift rushing of garments, a tread of light feet, and two arms were clasped around his neck.

"Gardiner! oh, I never thought you would care; indeed I never did! Can you ever forgive me, dear, for being so wicked? It is all my fault, every bit! I've been so naughty and wayward! Darling—husband! how thankful I am I waited to see what you would do when you read my letter! Just suppose you hadn't cared!"

She shivered, even while he caught her in his glad arms, and kissed her over and over.

"We will never think of it again, Irma! It is all over now, and I'll never be so cruel to you again."

"Nor I, Gardiner!"

And Mrs. Ray, over her fire, smiled astutely to herself while they had a long talk by themselves.

"I knew how it would end when the crisis came! It's on exactly the same principle as lancing a sore to make it heal. 'Divorced' indeed! as if I would have permitted such a thing, when all that was wanted was a little tightening of the loose screw."

And from that night, the skeleton disappeared forever from the Howards' beautiful home and happy hearts.

Heroes of History.

BY LAUNCE POYNTE.

II.

MAHOMET, Prophet and Revolutionist.

BROUGHT up amid a sensual idolatry which his powerful mind must early have discovered to be false, Mahomet heard of the sublime theory of the One God, and received it with avidity. From his subsequent teachings it would seem that the Hebrew prophets, beginning with Moses, first inspired him. He believed them and their teachings devoutly, and exulted in their prophecies. He rejoiced in his descent from Abraham, the first prophet, and gloried in the promise that "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Ishmael was a son as well as Isaac, and Mahomet took the prophecy to himself. He read of the Messiah and heard of the birth of Jesus. He must indeed have read one or more of the Gospels, for he revered Our Savior as a great prophet, and believed in his predictions. Only, like all Orientals, he confused metaphor with fact, and so missed the whole truth. Hearing Our Savior call himself always the Son of Man, he believed him only a man. He knew that the Jews slew this great prophet, who had predicted such woes to their nation for that sin. He also knew that this great prophet, before he was taken to heaven like Elijah, promised to send his followers a "Comforter."

That was all he seems to have known. Of the teachings of the Apostles there is no trace of his knowledge. It is not altogether surprising that the lonely Mahomet, poring over the wonderful truths he had read, all alone in the long night marches, should have brooded himself into a state of morbid excitement over his hidden lore. His nature was fervid and enthusiastic. He knew the juggling tricks of the idolatrous priests of the Caaba by heart. His whole family belonged to them. He knew them to be all lies. He knew in his heart that there was but one God. So he brooded year after year, till his heart became too full of the terrible secret to be hidden longer. Then it was that he suddenly left his home and trade, and rushed off into the desert cave.

In that cave he brooded till a strange idea took possession of him. That wondrous prophet of whom he had read, "Issa ben Maryam," (Jesus son of Mary) had promised to send a "Comforter." He, Mahomet, would be that Comforter. He knew nothing of our Savior's mystical meaning, only of a Comforter promised, which he thought had not come. Then it was that his mind became thoroughly imbued with this idea, and he became, not an impostor, but a monomaniac. There is not an act in all his past and subsequent career to remind one of the conscious impostor, but everything pointing him out as a man of vast intellect, devoid of education beyond the Hebrew Scriptures and the lore of the desert, become a religious monomaniac. In the silence of that solitary cave sat the Arabian, wrapt in his burning thoughts of the One God, of his duty to smite the heathen round about him, to make them throw down their idols and adore the One True God. Then and there he began to write the Koran. His creed was simplicity itself. "No God but God," Mohammed the Prophet of God. Not a word more. He came to tell the people to break their idols. "No God but God." He, Mahomet, was the prophet, the preacher, the Messenger of God, the Comforter.

Now it was that Mahomet first communicated to his wife the tremendous news. At first he was secret. His life was in danger if he gave utterance to such doctrines in the midst of the very tribe that gained their living by showing off three hundred and sixty-five gods, and a black stone to represent the devil. He told his wife first. Cadijah made no scruple to believe him at once. She acknowledged that there was but one God, and that her husband must be His prophet.

The suddenness of her conversion, as related by Mahometan annalists, if true, as it probably is, shows that the theory of Mahomet's sudden assumption of his mission is probably incorrect. He must have brooded over it

a long time, and his faithful, loving wife must have noticed it. When he first rushed off to the desert, she must have been grieved and anxious. When he came back, and with flaming eyes, declared to her the first chapters of the wonderful book he had written in the desert, no wonder she believed him inspired. She had never seen, heard, or read of the Hebrew Scriptures. Mahomet had kept his secret too well. It was only the unconscious plagiarism of memory that made him imitate the style of Solomon, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. To her, he seemed a prophet, verily, as he had always been a demigod to the fond Cadijah.

The next four years were consumed by Mahomet in these sudden rushes into the desert, from whence he returned at intervals with fresh revelations. The intense excitement of mind to which he was subject, showed itself in occasional epileptic fits, after which he would write of beatific visions of Paradise. In these four years, too, he gained a few converts, and wrote the Koran. Still, he was too cautious with all his enthusiasm, to preach publicly. He told the wonderful news, first to one, then another of his family. At last came the day when his raging sense of duty to publish the truth grew so strong to be resisted. He determined to publish the news to his assembled family, and stand or fall thereby. With that object, he made a feast, to which he invited all his uncles and cousins, among them young Ali, afterward to be his most famous follower. An Arabian family, in times of polygamy, is quite a small tribe, and the rapt enthusiast well knew that he took his life in his hand, when he rose, and to the amazement of all, commenced declaiming the grandly simple doctrines of the Koran. Silence held them all. The news of one God, to their minds, steeped in sensual idolatry, the pure morality preached by the Koran, both these things were so novel and strange, they could not speak. Most of all, a sense of the truth of this grandly simple doctrine forced itself on all present, as how could it not. At last the speaker paused, and faced his audience, solemnly.

"Now, whom say ye that I am?"

Youth, impetuous and generous, seeing the truth and ready to die for it, leaped up in the person of young Ali, a boy of only sixteen, who shouted:

"No God but God and Mohammed, the Prophet of God! Whoever denies it, oh, Prophet of God, I will pluck out his eyes, smash his teeth, and trample out his bowels on the ground!"

"God hath spoken through thee, my son," cried Mohammed, as he clasped the boy to his breast and wept tears of joy.

In his family, that day, all owned his mission but one, his uncle, Ibu Moayyah, a priest of high caste in the Caaba. He departed in disgust. His occupation was gone if the idols were overthrown. When he was gone, Mahomet, for the first time, preached the doctrine of Islam, or Salvation, hailed his followers as *Moslems*, or True Believers, and announced his mission to destroy the idols and preach salvation with the sword.

As might be supposed, this new sect, aggressive from its infancy, excited the hatred and apprehensions of the idolaters around them. The sword must be met with the sword. Ibu Moayyah organized his friends, and Mahomet was devoted to death by a sworn band of assassins. Alone amid thousands of foes, with only forty followers, Mahomet was compelled to flee from Mecca. He was accompanied by Ali, Abu Beker, and a few followers, but his enemies, as soon as they discovered his flight, pursued him into the mountains. At last he was compelled to hide in a cave, with Ali and his friends, while his foes came nearer every moment, and finally drew rein in front of the cave.

From that day Moslem take all their dates. It was the Hegira, A. D. 622.

The turning point of Islamism was come. The pursuers were about to search the cave, and in a moment more idolatry would have been safe forever, when a strange coincidence, believed to be a miracle by the Moslems, saved the fugitives in a remarkable manner.

Soon after their entrance a spider had spun her web over the mouth of the cave, and one of the pursuers pointed it out. He insisted that they were wasting time. Nothing could have passed in there for at least a day, and he had seen the fugitives not two hours since, far ahead. The rest saw the force of the argument and passed on. A spider changed the fate of the world. Mahomet and his friends pursued their way when the others had gone, and reached Medina in safety.

Medina received them with hospitality, and Islam with enthusiasm. There were two reasons for this. Medina had no Caaba to protect, and she envied Mecca for possessing one. The jealousy between the two cities lasts till to-day. In the new prophet Medina saw a chance to humble her rival and exalt herself. She received him with open arms while he preached "No God but God, Mohammed his prophet." Converts came by hundreds and thousands. A few years later the prophet led an army of forty thousand men from Medina, to drive out the heathen from the Caaba, and cleanse the holy place, offering to the Koreish choice of Islam or the sword. They chose the latter, met him at Mount Gabor, suffered a total defeat at the hands of Mohammed, the general, and then submitted to conversion and embraced Islam in a body. Even Ibu Moayyah was converted by the irresistible logic of the scimitar and Koran. The fate of Arabia was sealed. From being a land of filth and disgusting superstitions, she was to embrace the purest of religious creeds after Christianity.

From thenceforth Mahomet's career was one long conquest. As a general he had acquired the sure secret of success. He had imbued his men with a perfect contempt of death and with blind obedience to himself. The Moslem went to battle gayly. Life meant conquest, triumph, booty. Death in battle for Islam was an instant passage to paradise, to be received by crowds of enchanting hours.

To be his enemy was to meet death. To say "No God but God, Mohammed the Prophet of God," was to be perfectly safe in a moment. No Moslem would hurt another Moslem. So he swept over Nedjed, Hadramat, and Hadramant, till the whole Arabian peninsula owned Islam. Then, on the eve of invading Syria, he died, full of honors and blessings, an enthusiast, a monomaniac, if you will, but not a charlatan, not a conscious impostor, after a ten years' battle since the Hegira, A. D. 632.

In the character of Mahomet, we find a mind, so far from imposition, of the most earnest intensity of belief. The Hebrew scriptures and the life of Jesus, heard or read, none know when, without interpretation, without the crowning grace of Pentecost, burned themselves into his mind like fire. He hated and fought against the heathen as the old Jews did, believing "he was following the same old command." He hated and persecuted the Jews because they had slain the great prophet, Issa ben Maryam, who had foretold his (Ma-

homet's) coming. He hated the Christians, because, to his mind, they blasphemed the true God, by defying Issa ben Maryam, and because they also, with their crucifixes and images, broke the commandment against idols. In all this he was bitterly in earnest; for he abandoned home, friends, wealth, and comfort to preach one God to a nest of idolaters, and periled his life from the first by announcing that the strife was war to the knife. He threw down the gauntlet to the world, and vanquished it. If in the Koran are traces of borrowed light, it is equally clear that the theft was unconscious, and that it was only his intense belief that drove his mind off its balance, and made him a fanatic, a monomaniac, but not an impostor.

The Truthful Pilot.

THE passenger, who was going down the Mississippi river for the first time in his life, secured permission to climb up beside the pilot, a grim old grayback, who never told a lie in his life.

"Many alligators in this river!" inquired the stranger, after a look around.

"Not so many now, since they got to shootin' 'em for their hides and taller," was the reply.

"Used to be lots, eh?"

"I don't want to tell you about 'em, stranger," replied the pilot, sighing heavily.

"Why?"

"Cause you'd think I was a-lyin' to you, and that's somethin' I never do. I kin cheat at keards, drink whisky, or chaw poor tobacco, but I can't lie."

"Then there used to be lots of 'em?" inquired the passenger.

"I'm most afraid to tell ye, mister, but I've counted 'leven hundred alligators to the mile from Vicksburg cl'ar down to Orleans! That was years ago, afore a shot was ever fired at 'em."

"Well, I don't doubt it," replied the stranger.

"And I've counted 3,450 of 'em on one sandbar!" continued the pilot. "It looks like to tell, but a Government surveyor was aboard, and he checked 'em off as I called out."

"I haven't the least doubt of it," said the passenger, as he heaved a sigh.

"I'm glad o' that, stranger. Some fellers would think I was a liar, when I'm telling the solemn truth. This used to be a paradise for alligators, and they were so thick that the wheels of the boat killed an average of forty-nine to the mile!"

"Is that so?"